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The Franklin Mystery;

Or, The Recovery of the Jewels

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CHAPTER VII.

THE GORILLA.

"BACK so soon, Tom?" inquired the physician, his face betraying surprise. "Any news?"

"No; nothing definite yet; there is something I forgot to look at," replied Sparks.

"What was it, Tom?"

"I can't tell just yet, for I am not sure myself," responded the detective. "But let me go up to your wife's room right away."

With this Sparks came inside and bounded up the stairs and into the room of Mrs. Franklin. Going to the window he made a thorough examination of the sill; then he came back to the center of the room and looked closely at the sides of the bed.

"Hum, I thought so," he murmured.

Following this scrutiny he ran his eye over the woodwork of the doorway. There again he saw something that made him give way to a soft exclamation.

He pulled out a magnifying glass and held it over various parts of the walls in the hall.

Each time he stopped and looked a meaning gleam shot from his eyes.

"The light is beginning to dawn," he said to himself.

The doctor followed after, silently watching Sparks and wondering what clew he had found. His face lighted up with encouragement as he saw an occasional glance of satisfaction in the eyes of the detective.

Finally he ventured to ask what discoveries Tom had made.

"You don't see anything else that will clear me and help you to get on track of the murderer sooner than you expected?"

"Yes, but I don't like to anticipate," said Tom in a non-committal way. "No use of raising false hopes by telling what I think I have found out. Better wait until I am sure."

The doctor took the hint, not feeling offended by Sparks' desire to avoid answering questions. Nevertheless, the bereaved husband was encouraged by something in the other's tone. Cautious though the detective's words were, there was an intonation indicative of a mastery of the situation.

By this time the two men were on the lawn, the detective carefully going over the same ground he had examined a few hours before. In the grass half a dozen yards from the house a dark spot attracted his eye. Bending down he looked at it for several seconds.

Turning suddenly to his companion he said:

"How many days ago were you experimenting in your laboratory?"

"Not for the last two. Why?"

"You used a great deal of lampblack at the time, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I don't see what that had to do with it, Tom," replied the doctor with a puzzled look on his face.

"You will find out shortly," answered the detective. "Tell me, after finishing the experiment you ordered the negro, Frank, to dump the refuse back of the barn. Am I right?"

"Yes."

"However, the lazy devil didn't want to go so far, and was on the point of leaving it here," said Sparks. "But you came to the back door of the house about that time, and he did as he was ordered. Now let us go to the barn and see what there is to find there, if anything at all."

A few steps more brought them to a small structure the detective called the barn. It was a two-story affair, the lower part being used as a stable for the one horse the doctor used in visiting his patients, and a tool house. The upper part contained a hayloft, reached by a ricketty ladder.

The men walked in, and just beside the door a spot on the earthen floor showed where the sooty refuse had been left. But the men saw something else.

"Look there," said Tom, pointing at the spot. "Somebody has unknowingly walked through it, and later, finding that he was tracking the stuff about, has tried to remove all traces from his feet."

Nearby was a large heap of straw, dirty and grimy, which bore out his statement.

"He has been successful, too," said Tom. "For the life of me I can't see any signs of the direction the person took in leaving the building afterward."

As he spoke a pair of black, snaky eyes gleamed at him from the hayloft above.

Only for a second were the eyes kept riveted on the men. The next instant they disappeared in the depths of the hay. And just in time, too, to prevent their being seen, as Tom then glanced up and surveyed the top of the mow. He came closer to the ladder, and would have mounted it to pursue his investigations aloft if there had been the least sign of any one having gone up the rungs. On the other hand, there was absolutely no indication of such a thing having taken place.

Tom turned away and went out, the doctor at his heels.

"What next, Tom?" asked Dr. Franklin.

"The clew seems to have led us to a blind alley, as it were," was the response. "I will have to look further outside your grounds."

They retraced their steps over the lawn, and at the door of the house the doctor was told he had better go inside and try to put his mind at ease, while Sparks would continue his search alone.

Again he went to the side of the house and stood directly under Mrs. Franklin's window. There was a lightning-rod running straight up to the roof, and close enough to the window for a person to be able to reach out and touch it. In his first examination earlier in the day Tom had noticed black marks, but they were almost obliterated. This time he discovered something else, however.

Held by a sliver of the clapboards three feet from the ground was a tuft of black hair. He held it up before him to get a better look in the sunlight and examined it through his hand glass.

"It's black to be sure," he muttered, "but instead of being curly, as it ought to be in the case of the negro, the hair is straight."

Whose was it? It might be a man's or an animal's, he thought. It seemed almost too coarse for a human being. Yet if not the latter to whom did it belong?

Just then Tom looked across the street and his eye caught sight, through the trees of a vacant lot opposite the doctor's house, of a gilt-and-red-topped wagon moving slowly along the distant thoroughfare.

The appearance of this vehicle recalled something to mind, for the next moment he pulled from his pocket a copy of the latest afternoon paper he had been reading in the cars on his journey back to Dr. Franklin's place.

Unfolding it he turned to the second page and began to glance over the headlines. Suddenly his eye stopped at a column of flaring type, and he rapidly read the account following it.

"Here is another clew," he said to himself. And with that he dashed off down the street to the next corner.

At that point could be seen a long line of gaudily decorated wagons drawn by numerous caparisoned horses. Some of the animals of the jungle looked out from behind iron bars at the people, stopping on the street to watch the circus parade go by.

Tom came near and scrutinized the wagons containing the simian exhibits, all else having no interest for him at the time. He noticed that one cage was empty. This intelligence animated his movements still more, and going close to the line he asked one of the men where he could find the manager.

This important personage was pointed out among the several people walking along the sidewalk, and he was making a critical inspection of the members of the circus mounted on the wagons and riding on the horses and elephants.

Sparks approached him, and the manager turned an inquiring glance upon the detective.

"Have you recovered the gorilla that escaped from its cage last night?" asked Tom.

"No; but we have ten men scouring the neighborhood, besides all the persons attracted by the large reward offered for its capture," replied the showman. "You haven't heard of anybody getting on its track?"

Before Sparks could answer a commotion at the end of the block drew their attention in that direction, a vociferous crowd was walking along slowly behind four men who held by a chain a hairy, long-armed object struggling with its captors. Though it squirmed and twisted in their grasp it was practically helpless, for a closer inspection as the group drew nearer disclosed handcuffs on its arms and an iron muzzle covering its snapping and growling jaws.

"They got him at last," exclaimed the manager. "Hope the darn beast hasn't chawed up anybody. The show can't stand any damage suits, business has been so bum in this burg."

"You've got enough of a crowd here for a side show, and ought to charge admission," said Tom, in an effort to scrape up an acquaintance with the manager.

"That's right," assented the manager. "Ain't every day people can see a monkey trussed up like this one is. Perhaps I better pass around the hat." And he laughed as there was a movement on the outskirts of the crowd that indicated their intention of leaving, if the sight were going to cost them anything.

A signal from the manager brought the line to a sudden halt and the

driver of the empty wagon that had first caught Sparks' eye turned his horses round, coming up shortly along the curbstone where the four keepers held the ferocious gorilla.

The crowd was increasing by this time, as word of the animal's capture quickly flew about the vicinity. It seemed as if the whole of that part of Brooklyn had suspended their worldly affairs to take in the free show. Sparks came close to the animal.

"Why, these handcuffs have cut his wrists," he exclaimed, taking up one of the monkey's arms. He bent over close as he spoke and was so near that no one in the crowd saw what followed.

They heard the beast growl, however, as if in pain, and supposed it was caused by Sparks placing his hand on a tender spot. But in dropping the gorilla's arm after the pretended examination, the detective put unobserved in his pocket a tuft of black hair. It was almost the color of jet. Every part of him was as black as the ace of spades.

"Where did you catch him?" asked Sparks of one of the men holding the animal.

"Over yonder," replied the man, pointing toward the street from whence the detective had come. But they had made a detour from another direction or he would have met the circus men on the way to the parade. "See that house?" the man continued, directing Sparks' attention to Dr. Franklin's residence. "Well, in the woods back of that place we found him."

This was a wooded lot close by the one the detective had examined on his approach to Dr. Franklin's earlier in the day.

"Did it seem as if the beast had been in one place long?"

"No; he evidently had stopped there only a short time on his way through the woods off toward the bay."

"Probably felt the need of a bath," suggested one of the bystanders.

"Sure thing," answered another man. "You would feel that way yourself if you were as black as he is."

"I won't worry about his need of a bath," put in the manager. "If I learn that he hasn't been making things so lively that I'll have a lot of doctor's bills to pay for persons he might have tried to make mincemeat of; and then get sued for heavy damages besides."

"Wasn't any sign of a fracas he'd been in," answered one of the four men holding the gorilla. "Guess he just wanted to roam from his little fireside for a change, not meaning to do any harm."

"Well, I hope you are right, Bill," said the manager, "but when four men have all they can do to put handcuffs on the beast and get him back to us with a muzzle on, things look pretty dubious. All we can do is to wait for the returns. The wounded man will lose no time in letting us hear from them, provided they ain't been killed."

The last words startled the detective, though prepared to believe anything of the ferocious animal. He shuddered, inured though he was to crime, to think of Mrs. Franklin in the clutches of such a beast.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPARKS FOLLOWED.

Waiting until the gorilla was placed in his cage, Sparks turned on his heel and walked toward the trolley. There was no use to go back to see his friend the doctor just now and Tom wanted to avoid making an explanation of why he hurried off so quickly.

While waiting on the curb for the next car the detective took out the tuft of hair just taken from the monkey and compared it with the pieces he had found under the sliver of board on Dr. Franklin's house.

They tallied exactly. There was no mistaking the similarity of color and also the texture of the two bunches of hair.

"They all belong to the monkey," thought Sparks. "But at the same time this discovery has not made things clear. On the other hand, I am more puzzled than ever. If the monkey had killed the doctor's wife the beast would have strangled her just as she lay in bed, and the body would not have been found tied to the bedposts."

And Tom was right. Some being was responsible for that part. While he was comparing the pieces of hair a feeling of being watched made him turn round quickly. Part of the crowd had drifted down this way from the circus parade and a number of persons passed by at the corner.

As he glanced up his eyes met those of a shifty, nervous individual, tall, muscular and athletic looking. The stranger's look wavered, and the man showed confusion at being caught in observation of the detective. The next moment he slunk off like a fox discovered in the act of making depredations.

"Oh, some inquisitive person who wanted to see what I was doing," thought Sparks. "My, but he has a sneaky look about him! The man has a criminal face, if ever there were one; and what eyes!"

His meditations were interrupted by the trolley car stopping at the corner. He got on and rode to the nearest "L" station. The trains were late on account of an accident farther up the line, and while waiting he heard another trolley, and several people got off. But he paid no attention to them, for that moment his train came into the station.

Dropping into the seat nearest the door he pulled out his newspaper. But before beginning to read his glance swept the faces of the other passengers, from force of habit. At the other end of the car he saw looking at him the same man who had watched him examine the tufts of hair.

"What does he want?" thought Sparks. "For some reason or other he gives me a chill."

Try as he might the detective could not get his mind off the stranger with the furtive manner and shifty eyes. Sparks made an effort to read his paper, but to no purpose. The eyes of the man were constantly on him. Sparks, however, did not show by the least sign that he was conscious of being watched.

He tried to place him, but for all the detective's knowledge of faces he could not recall the man's features. But on the other hand, the stranger acted as if he had seen Sparks before.

After all, was he being followed—was the appearance of the man on the same train merely a coincidence? Sparks decided to make sure whether this was so or not the moment he set foot in Manhattan. He would lead the man a roundabout chase to find out.

Not long after making this decision Sparks found the train pulling into the New York side of the Brooklyn Bridge. Before it stopped the majority of people got up from their seats and stood waiting to get off the moment the cars came to a standstill.

But Sparks remained in his seat and surreptitiously glanced at the man with the snaky eyes. He was still seated.

But a second after the detective rose he left his seat. The man, however, made no attempt to follow Sparks just then, but left the car at the opposite end. The crowd of impatient travelers surged over the platforms and down the steps to the street below and joined the never-ending stream of humanity that daily charges through Park Row and Broadway.

Sparks allowed himself to be swept along with the rest, but managed to worm his way near the outer line of the throng. After proceeding this way for half a block he suddenly swerved toward the building he was passing and made out to stop for something he wanted to get in his pocket.

In fumbling for the mythical object his eyes took in the rest of the people behind. Only for a fraction of a second did the detective permit his glance to fall upon the stranger. But in that instant he saw enough to confirm his suspicions.

The man had stopped the moment he saw the detective do likewise.

"Yet it all might be a coincidence," thought Tom. "The only way to make sure was to thread his way down a number of side streets. If the man should be in sight after the detective had led him a wild goose chase hither and thither, there would be absolute proof of his intentions to watch the detective's movements. After that Tom would have to find out the reasonible why the man took such pains to follow him.

The detective joined the crowd and walked down Park Row as far as Ann street. Turning the corner quickly he hurried along the sidewalk until he reached the entrance of the Park Row building.

It was Tom's intention to dart in and go back to the "row" through the long corridor of the building. Then he would come back through the corridor to Ann street, and if he met the stranger face to face he felt sure of the man's intentions.

But on stepping from the doorway on Park Row, contrary to his expectation he saw no man in front of him. Could it be that the man was gifted with some second sight, and knowing that the detective intended to double on his own tracks, simply staid on the "row" and calmly waited for the detective to show himself?

But this time the man appeared not to notice Spark's presence.

"Not proved yet," said Tom to himself. "Will have to try again."

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE LUMBER YARD.

Sparks walked past the man without a glance in his direction and proceeded to go cross town through Vesey street.

"How strange!" thought the detective, "instead of my tracing some one, here a professional shadow, the business it is to follow other people is the hunted one." And he laughed to himself at the reversal of the usual order of things.

In making his way through Vesey street he did not look back, though tempted to many times. So few people were passing, any one behind could see him turn, and such a movement would cause suspicion in the mind of the man on his trail.

Continuing his walk toward West street the detective turned when he reached that busy shipping district, and went in a northerly direction for a dozen blocks. Then he walked east again to Broadway. In turning the corner he ventured a backward glance. The man was still hot on his tracks, though he kept nearly a block behind.

"There is no doubt of his being after me," said Sparks to himself. "We'll see if he likes walking enough to want to go through to the East River."

Over to South street the detective proceeded and up a few blocks, after he turned the corner. He saw the man in the distance.

He was on the point of walking up to him and asking the fellow what he wanted; and arrest him if necessary, as a suspicious character.

But there was still another surprise for the detective. The moment he started back, the fellow disappeared in a crowd at the corner.

Hunt as hard as he would there were no signs of the late pursuer.

The only thing he could do now was to go home and plan for the morrow. So Sparks went to the nearest "L" station. The train was crowded, as they all are at that time in the afternoon, and he had some difficulty in getting on the platform. But at last he wormed his way on board.

Looking casually through the car into the one behind, as the train rounded a curve, he caught a glimpse of a face peering at him from back of the door. Only for an instant did he see the features; not long enough for him to recognize the person. But he felt that it was the man who had been following him all the way from Brooklyn.

The car was too crowded for him to get near and see the man, and when Sparks got off at his station the man was nowhere in sight.

Tom's eyes were alert on the walk to his home, but there were no signs of the stranger with the crafty countenance. The detective's house was several blocks from the station, and he wished to get there as soon as possible. He decided to take a short cut through a vacant lot and a lumber yard, a short distance from the station. He had gone this way many times, even in the dark. The places were so familiar to him that he could thread his way around the piles of lumber just as well as if he were on the lighted street. And he thought nothing of the small recesses that were large enough to conceal any one who might be lying in wait for him.

So Tom took the short cut. He had got half through the lumber yard when a quick step sounded on the gravel behind.

Instinctively he jumped aside. And he was just in time, for the next moment a heavy piece of wood whizzed close to his head and fell a few yards in front of him. If the missile had struck where it was aimed Tom's skull would have been crushed by the blow, for the person who threw the block of wood had wielded it with all his might.

Sparks in turning took a step in the direction of the man behind him expecting to grapple instantly with his assailant.

But there was no one in sight. Tom ran back, looking around the nearest lumber piles. But the yard seemed as deserted as if no one were in the place.

The continuation of the stick showed that it was a piece picked up from a heap of odds and ends just inside the yard. He did not know whether some one had been lying in wait to commit an assault as he was passing by, or whether he had been followed by an unarmed man, who seeing his chance, after getting in the yard, picked up the most available object for his deadly purpose.

It seemed that if some one had been waiting for the detective to appear a less clumsy weapon would have been used. To a person who had premeditated such an attempt on the life of an enemy expected to go through the place at that time, the necessity of being properly armed would be the first thing occurring to him.

Tom began a thorough search of his surroundings, hoping to get some clew as to who his assailant might be. He tiptoed to the end of a lumber pile and suddenly darted around the corner in expectation of quickly coming in sight of his unknown foe. One or twice he heard a sound of another person disappearing behind the heaps of boards just in front of him, but the fellow was too cunning to allow himself to be seen.

Tom tried all the devices he was master of to trick the elusive enemy into showing himself. But at every stage of the chase Tom so far had to acknowledge he was beaten. At times he knew by the sounds the other man made that he barely got away.

"If I could only get one glimpse," said Tom savagely. "Oh, to get my hands on the scoundrel!"

But try as he might to find the person who had thrown the piece of wood at him with such deadly intent, Sparks was no nearer the solution of the mystery.

Nevertheless, just as he was about to give up the search, Sparks saw half-buried in a heap of dust in one corner of the yard a metal button covered with blue cloth having a brown strip. And three feet away from it he found a card case. Opening it he took out a card printed with the name "James Maughram."

"Hum, this is getting somewhere at last," grunted the detective.

The moment devoted to inspecting the card almost proved fatal like the unpleasant experience he had just passed through.

Again a chunk of wood came hurtling by his head. The aim of his assailant was a little better, for it took off the detective's hat. Sparks looked around to catch a glimpse of the murderous individual on his heels. In this he was more successful than on the previous vicious attempt made on his life, but he saw too little to do any good. Only a disappearing foot proved the presence of the person dogging Sparks.

The detective lurched round and started in pursuit, but the man got away too quickly.

"Well, this beats the Dutch," exclaimed Tom. "The fellow is bent on my destruction, and he seems to think I prefer to go out of this world by getting hit on the top-knot with an unplaned two by four."

And he picked up the rough piece of timber that came so near costing him his life.

There was nothing on it to indicate where it had come from or who had used it. Tom felt there was nothing more he could do in the lumber yard to discover his unknown assailant, and hurried home.

The events of the day gave the detective food for thought during the rest of the evening, and he pondered upon them far into the night.

He wondered if the attempted assault in the lumber yard had anything to do with the murder of Mrs. Franklin. There did not seem to be any connection, particularly as he had not come in contact with the suspected perpetrator of the crime.

"Well, I can't do anything more until tomorrow," said Sparks, "I'll see what the morning brings forth."

With this settled in his mind he retired for the night, and slept soundly until his usual rising time.

Jumping out of bed and plunging into his bath, Tom made a hasty toilet. The moment he got downstairs he asked his housekeeper for the mail. Fifteen letters were handed him, not an unusual number for a person of his activities.

But one seemed to catch his eye, and he hastily tore open the envelope. It bore the post mark "Albany, N. Y.," and Tom read the brief lines written on the sheet in a hasty scrawl. The words were as follows:

"Mr. Tom Sparks.

"Dear Sir:—The jewelry you advertised as being lost on the Empire Express while the owner was traveling to Albany is now in my office. The pieces were pledged to me for three hundred dollars. They can be redeemed by paying that amount and the lawful interest allowed pawnbrokers in this State. Hoping to hear from you regarding the matter, I remain, Yours truly,

"HENRY FOX."

Tom smiled to himself as he read this intelligence. His satisfaction was so evident that his housekeeper, Mrs. Flakner, could not refrain from remarking upon it when she came in with Tom's coffee just then.

"Must have heard from your girl, and got pleasant news," she said with an arch look at the handsome detective.

Tom responded with a beaming smile.

"Not from my girl this time, Mrs. Flakner," he said. "But the contents of this note make me feel almost as good as if I had heard from some bright-eyed miss whose good looks excited my admiration."

This was the extent of Tom's disclosures, and the housekeeper, knowing Tom's secretiveness in matters pertaining to his cases, refrained from further questioning.

Comparatively little time was spent on the other fourteen letters, as none of them could have the same interest for the detective just at this time. Of course, he had other cases on hand besides that of the Franklin murder, but he felt the necessity of applying himself to this one exclusively on account of his friendship for the bereaved husband.

So the other letters, after a casual reading were placed in his pocket, to remain there undisturbed until Sparks had got fairly under way with the most important one.

Like most light eaters, Tom did not waste much time at the breakfast table. A roll and a cup of coffee were soon disposed of, and he got into his overcoat.

Grabbing up a few papers from his desk, and saying "goodby" to Mrs. Flakner, Tom called a taxicab to take him to the Grand Central station.

He arrived just in time to catch an express going out for Albany. During the journey he planned his next move to bring to quick justice the man who had stolen the jewelry and pawned it in the up-State city.

On his arrival there he lost no time in seeking the address of the pawnbroker who had written the letter. Walking into the establishment he called for the proprietor. Fortunately he was in.

Tom made known his identity at once, for he was anxious to get a description of the person leaving the jewelry.

The pawnbroker acted as if he were disappointed in not getting in touch with some one who intended to redeem the articles, and felt that he had wasted time writing letters to no purpose.

"That's all right," Tom assured him. "I am going to take them out, as the owner is naturally anxious to possess them. And on the other hand, you, as an honest man, do not want to see the ends of justice defeated."

"Yes; that is so," replied the pawnbroker. "I do business on the square, and don't want to become an accessory before or after a crime. What do you want to know?"

"Just tell me what the fellow looks like who pawned these pieces of jewelry," said Tom.

The pawnbroker knitted his brows in deep thought.

"Let me see, I will have to think a moment. There have been so many customers since yesterday," he declared. "Ah, I remember now. It was a colored man."

"Light or dark?"

"He was very black. I should say he was pure negro."

Sparks nodded his head.

"How tall was he?"

"Oh, I should think he was six feet or a little over," returned the pawnbroker. "He was big and burly. Appeared to be a man of great strength. And now that I recall it, his face had a sanctimonious expression. Looked as if he might be the kind that spent lots of time at church—when he wasn't robbing henroosts or peoples' houses."

"Guess he's the gink I'm out for," murmured the detective. "But tell me, about what time did he come in to raise money on these articles?"

The pawnbroker told him, and the hour showed that the negro had had barely time to catch a train after leaving Dr. Franklin's house and to get to Albany, and rush into the nearest place to pawn his unlawful possessions.

CHAPTER X.
SPARKS TURNS A TRICK.

After getting all the necessary information Sparks told the pawnbroker to hold the jewelry ready to be used as evidence against the negro when that individual was arrested and brought before him for identification.

The pawnbroker acquiesced. First because he knew he had better do as he was told to avoid an unpleasant session with the police, and also because he knew Sparks' reputation, and felt honored to be of assistance to one who stood so high in his profession.

Now it was up to Sparks to find the negro. He might still be in the city. In that case it would be hard enough to get on track of the man. But it would be much more difficult to trace him if the fellow had left town right after disposing of the jewelry.

Yet it seemed to the detective that the man was not likely to get right out of town.

"Guess he decided to look over the local darky settlement before lighting out for good," thought Tom. "And no doubt by now is spending some of his easy money making a splurge for the benefit of some dusky beauties hereabouts."

The detective knew Albany as well as New York or any other large city where he had hunted criminals trying to escape the clutches of the law. He turned his footsteps toward the negro quarter.

But he showed no haste, to avoid attracting attention. Sauntering along he made it a point to stop before most of the shop windows, as if time hung heavily on his hands, and he knew of no better way to idle away the hours.

But his keen eyes were on the alert. No one passing through the street got by without coming under his scrutinizing gaze.

As Tom stood before one of the most attractively decorated windows on the block he ran over in his mind the plan he had formed for the negro's capture. He felt considerably elated over the success of his scheme so far. Writing advertisements for the jewelry as if it had been lost, and having them inserted in the dailies of the principal cities; to attract the attention of pawnbrokers, had worked out just as he had calculated the plan should.

Here, the "first crack out of the box," so to speak, he got on track of the place whence the negro had fled and disposed of the missing articles, by acting on the clever scheme he had evolved the day before. Now he must find the black culprit, and lose no time in effecting his capture.

"It seems to me," mused Sparks, as he stood in front of the window, "that he did not come to a place strange to him. He probably has friends in this town and intends to stay a little while. Like all of his kind he must be vain, and will not let a chance slip by to dress up in the loudest clothes he can get, to excite the envy of the people he knows."

Consequently, Tom felt that sooner or later his prey would show himself, gaudily rigged up in the habiliments dear to the heart of his race, and strut through the main streets of the city.

And in this he was not mistaken. Within half an hour Tom saw an overdressed negro coming down the sidewalk, who in height and build answered the description of the man he was after.

Yet it might be some one else—perhaps a person native to the town. Tom felt sure that if he could learn whether the man was a stranger without exciting suspicion, he would be in a fair way to get the person he was looking for. How would he do it? At last a feasible idea suggested itself.

Tom watched until the negro passed, and then he slowly followed behind. Just then the man stopped before the window of a haberdasher in the middle of the block, long enough to feast his eyes on a display of gaudy neckties for the benefit of the passing throng.

The detective came up behind unawares, and asked to be directed to a little known street. The negro fell into the trap.

"You sutunly got me, boss," answered the negro affably. "I don't know the streets heah better than you, as Ah am a stranger."

Tom thanked him and said he would inquire of the next person, while the negro went on his way.

"Guess he's my man," declared Sparks. "He answers the description, and being a stranger, there seems to be no mistake."

Then he fell in behind and trailed him to see where he would go. The black man, evidently out for an airing, walked leisurely down the street, first one side and then on the other.

"Seems to be free from all care," thought the detective. "Acts just like a person whose pocketbook puts him in the non-workers' class."

Later on the man he was following turned from the main street and walked off toward the negro quarter. Tom was at his heels, and he noticed him disappear in a house in the middle of the block. He made a mental note of the number, and went away, intending to return after dark to watch the man's movements, as he himself would not run so much danger of being observed. For a white man always attracts attention, if he is seen hanging around a district of that character. And further more there was no opportunity for Sparks to disguise himself then as a negro which he expected to do later, in order to keep close tab on the black six-footer, without exciting suspicion.

Retracing his steps, he reached the main street, and went to the Hotel Humphries where, engaging a room, he retired to put on the makeup necessary for the night's work.

"Look at that!"

Later he emerged, and was so completely disguised that no one would suspect him to be other than he represented himself. Even the people in the hotel were not aware of the change in his appearance. As he glided from his room in the clothes of a colored porter and waited for the elevator to stop at the floor to take him down, a guest passing through the corridor at the time, supposed him to be one of the hotel help on an errand to the room of another guest. And upon his entrance in the elevator car the man in charge thought Tom was somebody just engaged by the management.

To carry out this idea he rode down to the basement, and mingling with the other help, walked unconcernedly through the kitchen to the back entrance. The next moment he was on the street, walking toward the unsavory quarter of the town where he expected to find the tall negro.

He hung around the house where the fellow had disappeared, but the man failed to show himself. Feeling sure of his disguise Tom mingled freely with the crowd of colored persons standing in front of the building. Striking up a conversation with the nearest man to him, he finally made reference to the gaudily dressed negro.

In the course of a few minutes he learned that the man had arrived in town only the night before.

"He ain't going to stay long," his informant volunteered. "Made a killing on the races in New York, and he am heah only for a visit to see a yaller gal he used to know down there."

"What am the yaller gal's name?" inquired Tom, in low Southern accents.

"Sally Marble," was the reply.

"A good looker, ain't she?" asked Tom "Where am she living?"

"Over yonder," came the reply; and the man pointed to the house Tom had seen the negro enter earlier in the day.

Tom looked in the direction indicated.

"Huh, I wonder if she's the same yaller gal I uster know," he said. "My gal's name was Sally Marble. Guess I'll go and see."

With that he left his companion and walked into the house across the street. At the door was a crowd of colored people, and he learned from them which floor the girl he was seeking lived on. Her rooms were four flights up, and to reach the flat he was obliged to climb rickety stairs in a noisome, ill-smelling hall, lighted at every other landing with one small smoky lamp.

Tom had been in some mighty unsavory places in his time, but he felt that this would take the prize as the star tough tenement. As he ascended the stairs carefully he peered into the gloom, on the lookout for any lurking desperadoes who might be concealed in the dark recesses of the halls to waylay their more prosperous fellows living in the house. Ever ready was his strong right arm to give battle if suddenly attacked. Of course he had a revolver, but this he carried for only extreme cases. As a rule, Tom was able to brave his way out of ticklish situation with his fist and brawny arms.

Therefore, on the alert the detective finally made his way to Sally Marble's door. The idea of visiting the young lady of color was to see if she were wearing any jewelry not belonging to her. Tom suspected that the negro Frank had reserved some of Mrs. Franklin's jewels for a present to some dusky female. This conclusion he came to when the pawnbroker failed to produce all that were missing from Dr. Franklin's house.

Tom's plan was to hold the woman in conversation, if he found that she had the jewelry, and when Frank appeared on the scene to arrest them both.

He knocked at the door. At first there was no answer. The second time he knocked much louder, and he heard a noise inside.

"Whatcher want?" sounded through the thin panels of the door. It was a woman's voice, high and reedy.

"Want ter see my Sally," declared Tom boldly.

"I don't know yuh voice, nigger," came back in belligerent tones.

"Yes, yuh do know me, Sally," said Tom. "Yuh name is Sally Marble, and you is from old Verginy?"

"Indeed I is, colored man," returned Sally a little more amicably. "What am yuh name?"

"Ah ain't a-goin' to tell yer till yer opens the doah, Sally," said Tom. "That's a surprise foah yuh, though yuh will know me the moment yuh sot eyes on me."

By this time the female inmate on the other side of the door began to think perhaps, after all, a friend of hers was really standing in the hall. And in that case she did not want to slight him.

"Wall, guess I'll just take a peep at yer, to make sure," she said, opening the door and looking at Tom.

"You can't fool this chicken," declared Sally wisely. "Yuh certainly is a strange black man."

"Why, how could yuh say that, Sally," returned Tom in an injured tone. "Yuh fogot so soon when Ah took yer to campmeeting after getting through work when we alls was a working at the Hotel Belmont in Atlantic City."

"Haw, haw! Now I'se got yer, nigger," laughed Miss Marble, in high glee. "Ah was never in any such place. Never heard of no Atlantic City."

She was thinking somewhat of closing the door, leaving Tom on the outside, but he on the other hand, had been making the best use of his time.

By now Sparks was too far past the door to have it shut in his face.

CHAPTER XI.
SALLY MARBLE'S JEWELRY.

His manner reassured the woman, who saw that he was trying to ingratiate himself, and on that account forgave him for his forwardness, as Tom's actions were not offensive.

"Excuse me," he said with all the gallantry he thought a colored Chesterfield would observe on such an occasion, "but while Ah is free to admit you and Ah nevah was at Atlantic City in de same hotel, dat was my 'scuse to git 'quainted wif yuh, after Ah see yuh ain't the same yaller gal Ah uster know by de same name."

Sally Marble seemed to soften at this speech, but she still felt put out at the unceremonious attempt to make her acquaintance.

"Ah can't let yuh stay here and talk wif me, nigger," she said with a great show of dignity. "Ah is an engaged woman;" and Sally's vanity prompted her to hold up her left hand, on which was displayed a beautiful diamond ring.

It appeared too valuable for a person in such circumstance to own, and at the sight of it the detective could hardly suppress a start. It answered the description of one Mrs. Franklin had before her death. But he did not betray his feelings. On the contrary he showed all the awe and admiration it was supposed to excite.

"Dat am certainly the finest sparkler Ah ever did see," declared the disguised detective at the proper tone. "Yuh must have got a man what am nearly a millionaire, to buy yuh sich a lovely ring. But it ain't too good for a nice yaller gal from Verginy."

This struck home, and hit Sally's vanity so hard that, as Tom expected, she was anxious to let him see how her fiance appreciated her loveliness.

"Dat ain't all de presents Ah got," exclaimed Sally gleefully.

"Yuh is right, or Ah miss my guess," declared Tom, insinuatingly. "Nice, lovely yaller gal ginerally gits a trunk full, if she have the right kind of a provider."

"And dat is jist the kind my man is," said Sally proudly.

She walked over to the mantlepiece opposite the room and reached for a greasy covered box. As she moved forward Tom came close behind her. Sally misunderstood his action, and suddenly wheeled upon him with fire in her eyes.

"Keep yuh distance, nigger," she cried angrily. "Don't yuh 'tempt to tech the box."

As she spoke Sally picked up a razor laying on a table under the mantlepiece and opening the blade in a position of gory readiness, looked threateningly at the detective. But instead of showing fear, Tom affected to feel very much amused at her sudden alarm.

"Well, dat's a good joke on yuh, Miss Marble," guffawed Tom, as he fell back and dropped into a chair in the center of the room. "Jis' as if Ah was a-going' to try and rob yuh of dem nice jewels. Why, Ah is as tame as a flea. Remember Ah didn't ask to see yuh treasures, and when you tells me you am a-goin' to show me, Ah jis moved forward to see 'em. Ah'll go to de door while you show 'em, if yuh wish."

This relieved the tension somewhat, and Sally put down the razor, not placing it too far from her reach, however. Tom's attempt to mollify her prevailed, and she opened the box for him to see the rest of her presents.

There was a handsome bracelet set with rubies, a gold chain and locket studded with diamonds and some other trinkets—all of which answered the description of the articles taken from the house of the Brooklyn physician.

The detective saw enough to satisfy his suspicions, and wished to arrest the woman. But if he did, Frank, the negro who had given her the stolen jewels, would become suspicious of her absence and take flight. There was no use to run the risk of losing the main culprit by making a premature arrest of a person who at best could be held only as a material witness. Tom did not consider her an accomplice, or hardly a receiver of stolen goods, though she must have known that Frank could not give her such expensive presents unless he had come by them dishonestly.

While this flashed through Tom's mind Sally was laying the glittering shiny articles out on the mantlepiece for him to get a better view of their richness.

"Ain't they jist elegant?" said Sally looking to the detective for confirmation.

(Continued on page seventeen.)

DAZZLING SCHEMES;

Or, Love and Revolutions

By WILL LISENBEE

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CHAPTER VII.

THE FACE IN THE OPENING.

SANDY regarded the man with a close scrutiny. It was some distant relationship, then, that accounted for the fellow's presence in the house, Sandy concluded. He was a Russian, doubtless, as his name proclaimed. It was possible that he was some disreputable relative of the countess, who presumed on the relationship by thrusting himself into her home.

Sandy began to lose patience with the fellow.

"I called here to see Miss Dangerfield," he said, "and if you refuse to direct me to where she may be found, I shall go in search of her myself."

The Russian smiled. He stepped to the door and stood holding it ajar.

"The gentleman forgets that he is a prisoner," he said, and with an evil laugh that might have come from a devil, he slipped out and closed the door behind him.

Sandy sprang forward, but before he could reach the door he heard the key turned on the outside and the retreating steps of the Russian. He turned quickly to the other door, but it was also locked. He was a prisoner, indeed!

Sandy was disgusted with himself.

"To let a duck like that outwit me is pretty near the limit," he mused. "It would be plumb funny if there weren't others besides myself concerned."

He turned and walked to the window and pulled the curtains aside. Escape at that point was impossible, for the window was heavily barred on the outside. He stood for a little time looking out into the night.

The clouds had thickened and rain was falling. Where was Bobby? Was he still keeping watch at the front door? He blamed himself for the predicament in which he was placed. Where were the Countess of Zara and Miss Dangerfield? Something had happened—something which they had feared would happen when the call was made over the telephone.

The thought worried Sandy. He was like a rat in a trap. He turned and strode back and forth across the room. He did not mean that the room should hold him long if there was any way by which he might escape.

He made an examination of the doors. They were of heavy mahogany, and defied his strength to move them. He next directed his gaze to the walls and the ceiling. As he did so his eyes fell on an oblong space in the ceiling which did not correspond to the rest of it. It showed evidences of having been patched over by a not overly skilled workman. It was plain that a stairway had once occupied that end of the room, but for some cause it had been removed and the opening closed.

Sandy stood surveying the spot. It suddenly occurred to him that if he could reach the ceiling he might effect his escape from the room by knocking off some of the woodwork that covered the spot. Once out of the room, he reasoned, he might make his way back to the place by which he had entered.

This idea had no sooner occurred to him than he cast about for some means of putting it into execution. As he stood with his eyes on the ceiling he started with amazement. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. Could he have been mistaken? No, one of the boards which covered the oblong space on the ceiling was moving slowly. He watched it as if fascinated. The lights from the candelabrum shed an imperfect glow about the room, and the flickering flames of the candles cast grotesque shadows on the ceiling. At first he thought that it was the shifting shadows that caused him to think that the board had been moved; but now he was convinced that this was not the case. Slowly the board was lifted from its place, leaving a black space through which nothing could be seen.

So far there had not been the slightest sound. Immovable, in silent wonder, Sandy stood with eyes fixed on the dark opening.

Something moved in the dark space, and swiftly, noiselessly, serpent-like, it leaped downward, uncoiling as it fell.

It was a rope! The end dangled within a foot of the floor. With eyes wide with amazement, Sandy stared at it and then glanced upward. For a moment a slender hand was visible, and then an oval face, framed in a coil of dark hair, appeared at the opening.

"Miss Dangerfield!" he cried.

"Can you climb?" she asked, in a low tone that had a quaver of fear in it.

For reply Sandy seized the rope and drew himself up rapidly. He scrambled through the opening and stood on the landing above.

It was quite dark and he could see nothing, but a quick breathing and a faint, subtle perfume told him that his fair companion in the adventure was almost at his side. His heart was beating tumultuously.

"What has happened?" he asked, eagerly.

"I am so frightened!" she cried. "I can hardly tell you what has happened. Listen!"

Sandy stood breathless, alert and listening.

No sound could be heard save the breathing of the two.

"I fancied I heard them again," said the girl in a low, tremulous voice. "But it must have been the creaking of the floor."

"Heard whom?" asked Sandy.

"Ruric Damonoff and his gang!" she replied. "I saw them skulking about the grounds just as night was approaching, and then I called you over the telephone. They are now in the house," she went on, "and I have been terribly frightened!"

"Who is this Ruric Damonoff?" asked Sandy. "Is he really a relative of the Countess of Zara?"

"Yes—unfortunately."

"What is he doing here? and why do you fear him?" Sandy asked in bewilderment.

"Hark!" she cried almost in a whisper. "I think I hear them in the hall below!" She bent and placed the board over the opening.

They stood listening breathlessly. Sandy was mystified and perplexed. He caught the faint sound of footfalls below, but in a moment all was silent

"Miss Dangerfield," said Sandy, in a low voice, "if that fellow and his gang are still here, there is no reason that they should be permitted to remain if you want to be rid of them. If you will but direct me I shall——"

She stopped him with a little gasp of fear.

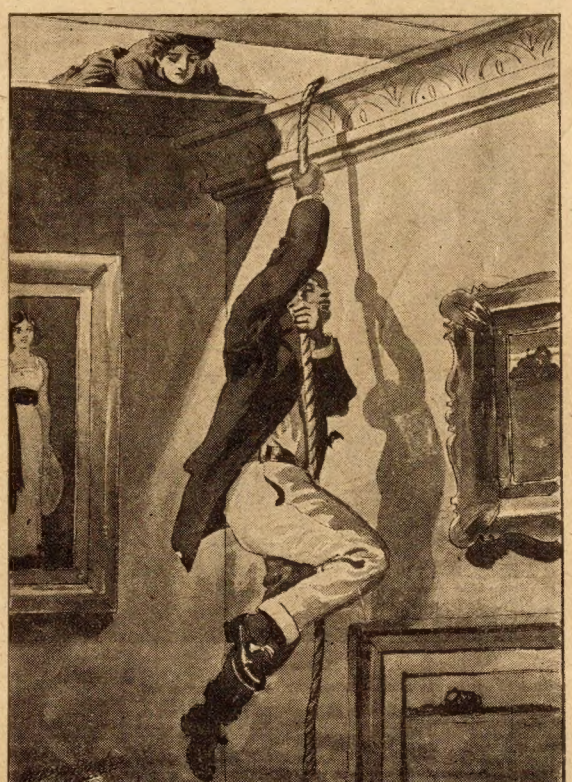
"No— no, you must not," she said. "Come."

She opened a door and a dim light came from beyond. Sandy followed her into a low room with dormer windows and quaintly furnished.

She closed and locked the door.

"Miss Dangerfield," said Sandy, "I can't imagine just what sort of a game this Damonoff is playing here, but if you want him suppressed, you just say the word."

"Wait," she said in a whisper. "He has many men with him, and it would not be best for you to venture having trouble with them. They will not look for me here," she went on, "for they searched this room just before I slipped into it from the closet at the end of the hall. I heard your knocking, but was afraid to try to get to the door to let you in. But when I heard you talking to Damonoff in the room below and discovered that he had locked you in, I found a rope which some workmen had used in hauling timbers up to a part they were repairing and dropped it to you through the opening. They will think that you are safely locked in the room, and it is better that we let them think so for the present."



Sandy drew himself up.

"I hate powerfully to have that heathen swaggering around the premises, scaring women," declared Sandy. "If I had only suspected his game I'd have held him up while I had the chance. But where is your friend—the Countess of Zara?"

As he spoke the portieres that covered the entrance to a little alcove opened and the countess appeared.

She extended her hand in greeting as she came forward.

"I welcome you as a friend in need," she said. "We have been terribly afraid, but your coming has brought a feeling of security."

"I'm glad you feel that way," said Sandy. "I really haven't done anything to protect you except to get locked in a room as a prisoner. It is plumb funny that I should cut such a figure, but I'm going to reform, and I'll begin right away."

The faint shadow of a smile flitted over the face of the countess.

"I don't think we shall be troubled further by Ruric," she said. "He doubtless thinks Bertha and I have escaped from the house, and it is likely that he and his followers will soon rid us of their presence, if he believes this."

"I hop" so," said Sandy. "It gets on my nerves to have a bunch like that pawing over things about the house without doing something to them. Do you think they'll get out without an invitation?"

"I think so," replied the countess. "They may be leaving by this time."

"Then I'd better go down and call off my partner," replied Sandy. "I left him at the front door, and if he sees any one making a sneak to get out he may muss him up some. He's got a lot of artillery stored on him."

The countess uttered a little gasp of surprise which was echoed by Miss Dangerfield.

"And who was it that came with you?" asked the latter.

"Just Bobby Henning," replied Sandy. "Oh! and he has been waiting down there all this time!" ejaculated the countess. "We must let him in by all means! Do you think there would be any danger of an encounter with Ruric if you went down to let him in?" she asked.

"Not a bit, if he keeps out of my way," laughed Sandy. "If you'll give me the key and start me on the right trail to the front door, I'll run down and let Bobby in. He must be getting lonesome by this time."

AT THE PARSONAGE

Coffee Runs Riot. No Longer.

"Wife and I had a serious time of it while we were coffee drinkers.

"She had gastritis, headache, belching and would have periods of sickness, while I secured a daily headache that became chronic.

"We naturally sought relief by drugs without avail, for it is now plain enough that no drug will cure the diseases another drug (coffee) sets up, particularly, so long as the drug which causes the trouble is continued.

"Finally we thought we would try leaving off coffee and using Postum. I noticed that my headaches disappeared like magic and my old 'trembly' nervousness left. One day wife said, 'Do you know my gastritis has gone?'

"One can hardly realize what Postum has done for us.

"Then we began to talk to others. Wife's father and mother were both coffee drinkers and sufferers. Their headaches left entirely a short time after they changed from coffee to Postum.

"I began to inquire among my parishioners and found to my astonishment that numbers of them use Postum in place of coffee. Many of the ministers who have visited our parsonage have become enthusiastic champions of Postum." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

Of course a girl is never really angry if a young man tries to kiss her, but if she thinks the occasion demands it she can put up a gigantic bluff.

Free Asthma and Hay Fever Cure.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 115 Lane Building, St. Marys, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma and Hay Fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures, and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

Before marriage a woman thinks she ought to have a protector, but after marriage she discovers that she has a husband to protect.

TO WOMEN WHO DREAD MOTHERHOOD!

Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of child-birth, or remain childless. Dr. J. H. Dye has devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that all pain at child-birth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, 290 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain; also how to cure sterility. Do not delay but write today.

Some people seem to get round shouldered from carrying the responsibility of things that do not concern them in the least.

LADIES, PRESERVE YOUR YOUTHFUL APPEARANCE.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results. Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 497, Blairsville, Pa.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SHOT IN THE DARK.

Through the hallways and down the two flights of stairs Sandy groped his way. The house was silent, and if Ruric Damonoff and his men were in the building, Sandy neither saw nor heard anything of them.

He reached the front door, inserted the key and opened the heavy shutter. Henning was standing a few steps away, and at the sight of Sandy emerging from the doorway he made a quick movement and the blue steel of a pistol in his hand glinted for a moment in the light of the rising moon. But with a whispered word of caution, Sandy beckoned to him.

"Have you seen any one leave the building?" Sandy asked in a guarded tone.

"Not a soul," replied Henning. "I had just about made up my mind to go and look for you. How did you get in and what have you been doing?"

Sandy explained briefly. "If the Russian and his outfit are still here," he said, "they ought to be smoked out, and—"

He stopped abruptly.

The muffled report of a pistol came from the building. A woman screamed, and the faint and indistinct tumult of rushing feet could be heard.

"Good God! those devils are up to some deviltry!" gasped Sandy, and he leaped through the open door, followed by Henning.

A vague and indefinable fear of what might have happened to the two women gripped at Sandy's heart as he plunged through the darkened halls and up the stairways.

His sole thought was to get back to the room in which he had left the countess and Miss Dangerfield. What danger beset them, he did not dare to think.

As he reached the hall leading to the room he saw that the door was standing open and a faint light came from the inside. As he rushed forward he stumbled over something lying silent and inert upon the floor.

He stopped abruptly, a sudden sense of horror coming over him. He bent quickly over the figure lying there. It was that of a man, and he was dead!

"In the name of Heaven! what does this mean?" gasped Henning who now stood at Sandy's side.

"There has been murder done!" said Sandy. He stepped quickly to the open door of the room. There was no one there; the Countess and Miss Dangerfield had disappeared, and with them those who had participated in the tragedy!

Bewildered, like one stupefied, Sandy stood looking about him. The room, which was still lighted by the small brass lamp suspended from the ceiling, showed no disorder—no signs of any struggle having taken place there.

Sandy stepped across the room and glanced quickly into the alcove, but it was empty. A faint perfume lingered in the air, and through the window the light of the rising moon fell in little pools of shimmering yellow radiance.

A vague sense of fear for what might have befallen the women in his absence beset him. They had not left the house, and he meant to find them—to protect them from Damonoff and his lawless gang.

He was about to turn away from the alcove wh something dark moved against the light falling upon the window, and the rays of the moon threw the dark silhouette of a woman's head against the pane.

Sandy leaned forward and threw the window open, and there, crouching on a narrow balcony he saw the forms of two women—Miss Dangerfield and the Countess.

A little gasp of terror came from the lips as the window was opened, but as the moonbeams revealed the face of the American she gave a cry of joy.

"Oh, Mr. McDonald, we have been terribly frightened!" she cried. "Something dreadful h happened!"

"Where—where are they?" asked Bertha with a shiver.

"There is no one here but Mr. Henning and myself," assured Sandy, "excepting a man in the hall. I think he has been shot," he added guardedly, not wishing to add to the terror of the situation by telling them the man was dead.

The countess stood at the window faint and trembling.

"My God!" she cried. "Is—is he badly hurt?"

"We cannot say just yet," said Sandy evasively.

"Who is it?" The voice of the countess shook as she asked the question.

"I have never seen him before," Sandy said. "He is a man of forty perhaps, with a very dark mustache.

"It—it must be one of Ruric's own men," the countess said. She stepped through the window into the alcove, followed by Bertha. "When we heard the shot and the rush of feet in the hall," went on the countess, "we were terribly frightened and slipped through the window and onto the balcony. After the shot was fired I could hear the men running down the stairs. Is the wounded man unconscious?"

"He is lying as if dead," replied Sandy.

"Oh, that is terrible! We must call a doctor."

"I shall see to that," said Sandy. "Where shall we take him first, though?"

"Bring him into the room, if you are sure that he can do us no harm—"

"You need have no fears on that score," assured Sandy, "but we can take him to some other room."

"Bring him in here," said the countess. "Bertha and I will remain in the alcove. It makes me faint to think of seeing blood!"

She shivered as she spoke and put her arm about Bertha.

Sandy went out into the hall. Bobby was standing over the dead body lying there.

"There is no doubt that he is dead?" Sandy said.

"Not the least," answered Bobby.

They carried him into the room and laid him on a couch. An examination showed that the bullet had probably gone straight to the heart.

"What is to be done?" asked Bobby. "We ought to notify the officers of the law."

"Yes."

"Probably I had better send the cabby," said Henning. He stood looking into the face of the dead man. Something about the features seemed familiar. He bent a little closer and an exclamation of amazement fell from his lips.

"What is it?" asked Sandy, turning quickly. "Do you know him?"

"Yes," replied Bobby with visible agitation. "It is Luis Tores, one of President Aguerra's secret service men!"

Sandy gave vent to a low whistle.

"Then this affair is pretty sure to make a whole lot of trouble for some one!" he said.

"It will," nodded Bobby, gravely. "As a friend of the president, it is my duty to report the matter to the authorities of the government at once."

The portieres at the entrance of the alcove parted and the face of Miss Dangerfield appeared.

"Ruric Damonoff and his men are leaving," she said. "They have just crossed the grounds and entered the road leading to the north."

"It is a pity that they could not have been run in before they escaped from the house," Sandy said. "It looks as if they had committed murder!"

Miss Dangerfield's face went white.

"Then—the man is—dead!" she gasped with a shiver.

"I am afraid so. Are there no servants in the house?"

"They are helpless with fear."

"Well, we shall get on without them. We must notify the authorities."

"I shall go at once," said Bobby as he came in. He bowed low before the two women he saw before him, while Sandy murmured the words of introduction. The countess held out her hand.

"We have heard a great deal of you since we came to San Vincente," she said. The color came swiftly into her face as Bobby took the slender hand. "How unfortunate that the pleasure of our meeting should be marred by this dreadful tragedy!" she added.

Bobby could never remember just what he said. He could only remember the touch of a slender hand and the light of a pair of wonderful gray eyes that looked into his—eyes that brought to him a rush of memories of an evening in another land—when the same gray eyes had looked into his.

CHAPTER IX.

JOINING FORCES.

The events that followed seemed like a dream to Bobby. He rode into San Vincente and notified the authorities of the tragedy at Dragon Castle, and the police as well as a detachment of soldiers hurried in furious haste to the scene of the tragedy.

The body of the murdered man was taken to the city, and a hasty search was made for Ruric and his band, but they had made good their escape.

A military guard was stationed at the castle, and the city was in a state of nervous excitement and apprehension.

It was past twelve o'clock when Bobby returned to the city.

The tragedy at the castle was likely to result in the government keeping a close watch on the movements of the Countess of Zara and Miss Dangerfield, for having already been suspected of being in league with the revolutionists, the killing of one of the government's secret service men at the castle would afford additional grounds of suspecting them.

Sandy and Bobby discussed the affair over the wine and sandwiches served by the Japanese servant in Bobby's study.

"It is very unfortunate," declared Bobby. "It is very plain that this Ruric Damonoff is in sympathy with the revolutionists. But what I don't understand, is what he and his outfit were doing at Dragon Castle tonight. Did you find out?"

Sandy shook his head.

"The women never told me," he said, "and it don't seem to be any of my business to inquire, as they did not seem disposed to discuss the matter. One thing I learned, and that is that this Ruric Damonoff, the fellow I had the trouble with in the St. Denis cafe, is a relative of the Countess of Zara. But just why they are afraid of the geezer, or why he took the liberty of coming to the castle with a bunch of toughs to frighten the women, is something I did not find out."

"I wonder," said Bobby, "why they don't turn him over to the officers of the law."

"It may be," Sandy replied, "that it is because he is a sort of relative, or maybe they are afraid to do that. Do you suppose we shall be suspected of being in any conspiracy with this Ruric or mixed up in any way with the killing of Luis Tores?"

"It is likely we should were it not that I am not only known to be in sympathy with President Aguerra's endeavors to put down the revolution, but it is to my interest that he should succeed."

"But those Guadalayarans know nothing about me," objected Sandy. "They may take it into their heads that I am what they call a filibuster or something of the sort and make a rough house for me."

Bobby laughed.

"I don't think we need lose any sleep over that," he said. "You are my guest, and that in itself will be sufficient to avert any suspicion. Besides, it is pretty generally known that Damonoff tried to kill you in the cafe the other day, and as he is suspected of having killed Luis Tores, one of the president's secret service men, it hardly seems possible that you should be suspected of being connected with him in the affair."

Bobby drained his glass and lit a cigarette.

"I have been wondering," Sandy said, "why it is that the countess and Miss Dangerfield will stay at Dragon Castle with no one to protect them."

"The same thought has occurred to me," nodded Bobby. "By George! Sandy, I don't like the idea of their staying there under the circumstances."

"Nor do I," agreed Sandy, concealing the surprise he felt at Bobby's evident interest in the two women. "There's a great deal about the whole business that I do not understand. What, for instance, was Luis Tores doing there?"

"I have no doubt," said Bobby, "that he was there for the purpose of spying on the Countess of Zara. She is suspected, as I told you, of being in sympathy with the revolutionists, and it has even been whispered that she is giving them aid."

"Do you believe that?"

"I hardly know. She undoubtedly has some motive in coming to Guadalayara at this time. She is not here permanently; that is easily understood. But I cannot, without knowing her better, form any opinion as to what motive she could have in giving assistance to the revolutionists."

"Nor can I," said Sandy. "But I shan't forget the warning you gave me a few hours ago—that trouble might result from any compact with the two women. The government spies must have some proof on which to base their suspicions. Did you learn what these are?"

"I did not. Such matters are kept very close, and the public gets but little information, but there was a leak somewhere that let out the report that the two women—especially the countess—were being watched."

"Do you suppose they will be arrested, charged with aiding the revolution?"

"I should not be surprised. In fact, it it probable that they are virtually prisoners at this moment, in their own house, and would not be permitted to leave."

Sandy rose and paced the room with a quick, nervous step.

"Should that be the case, is there anything we can do?" he asked, pausing before Bobby.

"I am not sure," responded Bobby. "Of course if I could give the president assurance of their loyalty I could do a great deal, but how could I do that, knowing scarcely anything about them?"

"Do you think I might be allowed to call upon them?"

"Why I think so."

"Then I shall do so, and I am going to

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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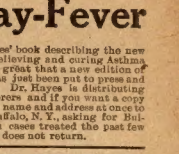

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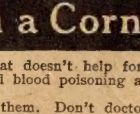

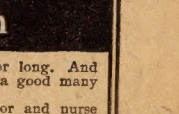

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CHAPTER XIV.

BARRON GETS LIGHT.

MINUTES passed before Barron could cast off the weight of his oppressing, consuming thoughts, but he finally became aware that Eli Dodd was speaking, and he tried to turn his mind to present conditions. Eli stood with his hand resting against the hull where, just below the name of the brigantine, was the single word, "London."

"There we get it," said the sailor. "An English ship, right from a jolly fine port. Ursa Major, of London."

"Pity that her papers are gone, for they would tell more. I would like the story of this vessel since she started on her last voyage."

"We can guess it, sir. A gale, masts carried away, fire somehow started, a taking to the boats—that's an old story."

Barron remembered something, stepped to the broken bulwark and called his companion.

"How do you account for the peculiar look of that injury? Notice that the breached planks bend outward, notice—"

"By Neptune! that seems like a cannon ball's work. If it passed over her nearest bulwark, and dropped so as to carry away the side here, it would leave just such a hurt. Thunder! I am not so sure of my first diagnosis. Wonder if pirates did that?"

"I want to look inside again."

They searched, and Barron turned up every sail and other thing that might possibly hide a secret, but nothing came of it. The brigantine told no tales, and her history rested where it was.

With their ideas stirred into acute action they noticed, however, that signs of recent human occupancy of the craft were many. At the beginning they had not dreamed of looking for footprints, but they were everywhere—in the sand on deck, in the dust of the cabin, and also in the forcastle and in the hold. And always the tracks were the same; clumsy prints, as if their maker wore some fabric wrapped around his feet.

The mysterious man assumed stronger proportions each passing hour, for if he was not a friend he might be a dangerous enemy.

At noon fish were caught in the outlying waters, and the adventurers dined bountifully, having no apprehensions of famine. Eating, Barron scanned his mate's face closely, remembered that he had always been regarded as a strictly reliable man, and, seeing the honest cast of his broad features, he decided to trust him up to a certain point.

"Eli," he said, "this is not the first time I have heard of the Ursa Major. Benito, the cook in the Sweeping Broom, was a rather decent fellow for a pirate, and talkative enough at times. Among other things he told me of the sacking of the Ursa Major by Captain Duke. He clearly described her as a brigantine, and said that when Duke attacked, the crew resisted until every man was killed in fight."

"Noble lads!" exclaimed Eli.

"The freebooters boarded, but failed to find plunder, the vessel being in ballast. Before leaving her she was set on fire, and as the Sweeping Broom dropped her far astern she was what Benito termed a roaring furnace."

"Hardly," the sailor commented. "She has been on fire, but never that bad. Maybe a squall sprang up and stopped the blaze."

"You notice that discrepancy. Possibly there was another. I am inclined to doubt that all hands were killed. It may be that, when they saw the fight was hopelessly lost, a few of the Ursa Major's men hid away in their ship and escaped death."

"Rather poor chance for that when she was in ballast."

"True, but as plunder was the sole passion of the pirates, they may have examined their trophy but indifferently for other things. A man concealed in a dark corner in the run, or elsewhere, could be overlooked. If that was it, he or they may have come forth and extinguished the fire."

"Maybe."

"Still, your theory of a squall is more likely on that point. Now, then, I asked Benito if the brigantine was an Italian ship—I expressed myself that way, I remember—and he said he thought not, though he did not know. We may, therefore, guess at her flag. She was once English, no doubt, but may have changed hands. What do you think?"

"I still say, English."

"Well, as to how long she has been aground here. What is your belief?"

"Hard to say. She is tight below and her wood is solid, but that may deceive me. The sand banked up around her is not reliable, either. It may have been the work of five years, or a good, solid, howling wind from the east, followed by a regular gale, might pile the stuff high in a few days. Other storms would follow, and the work would go on. If I am pinned down to a guess I'll say she has been here two years."

"Benito stated that she was sacked 'a few months ago,' to use his own expression, but I do not think he tried to be exact. Far from it. Can she have been here a dozen years?"

"I am not a good authority on wrecks, but I say no, most readily. No, no, sir! Twelve years would rot her deck and let it drop in, or, at the very least, would make her planks so rotten that they would sink under our tread. Was it so? No, sir, those planks trod solid as when she first took the water."

"I agree with you on all points, but I don't understand fully."

"Neither do I, mate. For instance, what was this brigantine doing in these waters in ballast? If she had carried a cargo we might guess that she wanted to trade with some island folks somewhere, though where, the good fairies only know; but an empty ship, a ship carrying only shingle ballast in her hold

"We are both among wild beasts."

—eh? Why the dickens should she fetch to in these waters?"

"Possibly Captain Duke chased her a long while before overhauling her."

"Maybe," admitted Eli dubiously, like one holding conflicting views.

Barron was even more perplexed. His father's map had been found in the Ursa Major, but how had it come there? Twelve years before Clayton Barron had tried to enlist capital to enable him to charter a vessel and sail to an island in the Indian Ocean, undoubtedly this same island, there to secure a mysterious treasure; but he had been arrested on a false charge and sent as a convict to the Australian bush. He was supposed to be there now, yet his treasure map had been found in the Ursa Major, and, if Benito was correct, only a few months before. And it seemed that the brigantine had been aground on Torrento only a short time. What did it mean?

Reese Barron's ideas slowly wheeled into form. Ursa Major might have sailed under the British flag without still owning London as her home port. The changes of time may have made her an Australian craft, and perhaps it was from an Australian port that she sailed on her last, tragic voyage. But the map——

He stopped short in his analysis, startled by a new possibility. It was not incredible despite his failure in London to learn of any change in his convict father's circumstances, that Clayton Barron had been pardoned, or had escaped from the bush, and that he had organized a party to go in search of the treasure; and that the Ursa Major had sailed from Sydney under his mastership to secure the treasure.

And all the men in the brigantine were said to have been butchered by Captain Duke.

While he had been meditating Eli was smoking and thinking on his own part. Now he suddenly raised his head.

"There is something more about this island," he announced.

"What?"

"The name, Torrento, has rung otherwise familiar in my ears all along, and I have it now. Back years ago there was a pirate even more famous and dreaded than the skipper of the Sweeping Broom. That other fellow's name was Seagulf, and his vessel was the Red Talon. Well, I've heard it said that Torrento was one of the home resorts of Seagulf."

"Ah!" breathed Barron sharply, stung by sound of the familiar name. "Well, what do you make of that?"

"Nothing, except that this was old pirate ground. Seagulf is dead long ago, or so I've been told. He had a brush

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his knowledge of and indifference to the fact that Duke contemplated making way with him, Barron. He remembered, too, his own half-exasperated, half, logical mental query on a former occasion whether Piper's comradeship with Duke was due to a dark side in the rich man's past career, a query he had then plainly colored with the word pirate.

But never before had he thought of associating Piper with Seagulf.

Back went his recollections to the days when, as a boy of 12 years, he had seen Jacob Gower and, resenting his seizure of the homestead, he had struck that man in the face in youthful anger. He tried to remember how Gower looked, but could recall nothing more than that he was a person given to flesh.

Now, he was aflame with his theory. He wondered that it had been so long in coming, but Piper had always spoken with an English accent, and, in his bland way, had told of boyish experiences in that country, and of later familiarity with famous men, even with King George. If his claims had been false they had been made with ease that was consummate skill.

Yet, his wonderful knowledge of the minute features of handling a ship, and his consent, if not his project, that Barron should be butchered by Duke—these things were not easily explained away.

Barron sat almost stunned, for the moment, by his thoughts. The ramifications of his tangled, bitter life-task were turning upon themselves and centering in the Indian Ocean. Piper was in the outlying waters, and the wreck of the Ursa Major was on Torrento Island with himself. Had his father sailed in the ill-fated brigantine, and, if so, had he perished in the pirate attack or lived—the meditator broke off suddenly and leaped to his feet.

"Mate," he exclaimed to Eli, "we will go in search of whoever else is on the island!"

"Now?" questioned the sailor.

"Now!"

Barron was already moving, and Eli followed, wondering at his gray face and passionate manner. Why, he mentally questioned, was his companion so wrought up over outside things?

The younger man planned quickly, and decided to pass along the east side of the island, giving attention to the minor ridges, and then return by the main range. A good deal of space would thus be covered.

Keeping close to the beach they had gone perhaps half a mile when both suddenly halted. Their attention was on the inner line of the sand.

"Another wreck!" exclaimed Eli, amazed.

"Ay," Barron agreed, "but one long here. Little more than a pile of rotten timber, but do you see?—somebody has been excavating there!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE HIDING MAN.

Barron and the sailor moved forward and stood by the new object of interest. The ship was deeply buried, only her sagging bulwarks and her fallen masts and spars showing above the level, but a ship she surely had been in her days of service. Years had elapsed since she drove upon the sands, and they had been harshly busy with her. Decay was there, bleak, ugly and pitiless, but somebody had taken enough interest in her to heap up mounds of sand a few yards back from her rotting hull.

"It dates long back," said Eli slowly. "I mean, the wrecking of her."

"We can judge from this how the Ursa Major would look if exposed for long, and thus we are able to say she has recently come to Torrento. What interests me," Barron added, "is this digging."

"A guess is not hard. In old times ships went with big sums of money, coined or in bullion, in their holds. The digger knew this, and had the curiosity to tunnel into her heart."

"Unless he had spare time, more than curiosity urged him on. Much labor has been expended on this task."

"And it is not all done."

"No. A part of the interior remains unopened. It is almost like excavating in clear sand. Yonder masts had probably tumbled over the bulwark before the digger came, while the spars"—the speaker lifted one end and it broke in his hand. "Only decayed wood. I wish I knew what this ship was in her day."

He surely wished it. A treasure had been on Torrento, and now somebody had been delving in the carcass of the old vessel. Was it there that Clayton Barron had hoped to secure his riches? If so, his son was too late to break ground first above the maritime grave, though perhaps in time to have his share in future delvings.

And it was in his mind to dig.

Eli was upon his knees, scooping the sand away from the stern.

"I don't suppose," he admitted, "that time has left a word of her name, but I would like to see it. I feel curious, myself."

Barron gave no heed and some minutes passed. Then the sailor, who had been studying obscure marks on an aged plank, suddenly leaped to his feet.

"I've got it!" he declared. "Her name was the Black Beak."

"Ever hear of it?" asked the American carelessly.

"No, but, somehow, it brings back Seagulf's clipper craft. That was the Red Talon. Wonder if the Black Beak was also a pirate ship?"

"The association of names is rather impressive. Still, it is not so much the name as other possibilities that interest me. We will begin digging here tomorrow."

"Eh?" cried Eli, staring blankly.

"Exactly!"

"Why, man alive, what we want to do is to raid the Ursa Major, get her best timbers and boards, and then build a raft. After that, back to the path of the merchantmen."

"That enterprise will keep. I take it, Eli, that you have no objections to gathering riches."

"The objections are on the other hand. The riches wouldn't have me in the same universe with them. Howsoever, mate, I appreciate your little joke."

Barron had the treasure fever, but he did not see fit to press the point then. Satisfied that nothing was to be found in the Black Beak's grave without the help of spades, he again led the way forward and the hunt for their supposed companion on Torrento was resumed. The sun was within an hour of the western horizon when they returned, unsuccessful. No man had been found, though other footprints were seen, and additional signs of human presence on the island.

That night the two adventurers ate of sea fowl's eggs, gathered from nests on the main ridge, and then they turned in aboard the Ursa Major and slept the night through.

Barron had temporarily lost his interest in the treasure, but with this falling away he became more eager to discover the man, or men, on Torrento. At intervals, all through the day, they hunted, but no stranger met their gaze.

Another night was spent in the Ursa Major. Evidently Eli had been doing some thinking, and was not so eager to get away from Torrento at once. While they waited for the time to turn in both fell into silent thought, but he finally spoke abruptly.

"How long," he asked "would it take to uncover the rest of that old hulk, meaning the Black Beak?"

"Two men should do it in less than a week," Barron returned.

"There must be something in it. Old-time galleons and the like went laden with great riches, though whether they bore any into the Indian Ocean I can't say. Seems best o' dwelling upon your previous arguments. This brigantine came here in ballast, and the ship that has no cargo has a plain scheme in mind to load somewhere else. As you early pointed out, we have here the usual supply of carpenter tools, but there is a dozen and a half of spades. That's a big lot, for spades are not used aboard ship to bore holes, drive nails or hew wood. Then there is the digging done by the wreck of the Black Beak. Do you know what I think?"

"What is it you think?"

"That all you have said is right. Captain Duke's pirates did not kill all of the crew of the Ursa Major, and they navigated the brigantine here, carrying out their old project to find treasure here. And they have been digging here for it."

"Some time ago you objected to having a single man survive Duke's massacre, claiming that he could not hide successfully in the brigantine, and now you practically permit enough to survive to sail the vessel. We will pass that by, for the main point is that the Ursa Major certainly fetched to Torrento. Proceed!"

"Well, sir, we might perhaps take a little turn at digging in the grave of the Black Beak. If it paid the other fellows to do it, why not us?"

"Just what I have been urging upon you."

"Any time you want to dig, say so, sir. I'd like to talk it over with the previous digger. Wonder who he is?"

Barron wondered, too. During the day the possibility had been growing upon him that his father was the survivor of the men in the brigantine when she was sacked by Captain Duke. If that was so, Clayton Barron might at that moment be on the island.

He turned in early, planning to awaken soon after midnight and go quietly out to reconnoiter in the darkness. Even if the man, or men, in hiding kept close by day, it was unlikely that they would keep close at all times, and night was the period in which they would move about. He was feverishly anxious to lay hands upon whoever hid in the dens of the ridge.

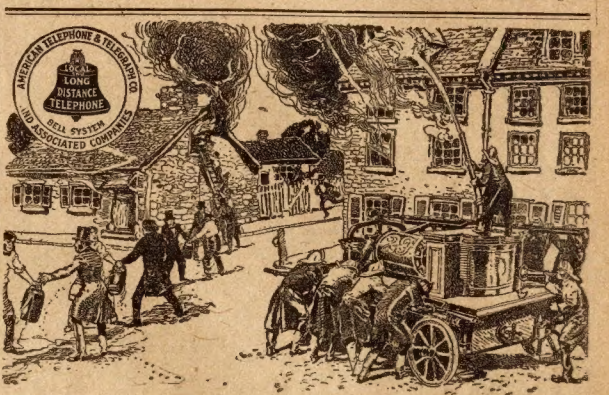
Being a sailor it was easy to awaken as planned, and he left Eli asleep in a bunk and went forth.

The night was calm and moonless, while the feathery clouds that blanketed the heavens dimmed the stars without plunging the island into unfavorable darkness. He dropped to the ground and began his tour. Soft-footed as possible, and stealthy as a flitting shadow he moved along the main ridge, having a large part of the island more or less clearly open to his view. If others moved there he hoped to see them.

When he had gone half a mile north he turned back and, finding a rock under a tree that brought him into dusky cover, he sat down with the Ursa Major and the burial place of the Black Beak alike under observation. Unless the hider was destitute of curiosity he was likely to venture near the vicinity to see what had happened during his absence, especially as to the older vessel.

Sitting, he was keenly observant, but he found time for sundry accompanying thoughts. Again the harsh verdict of fate galled him. The painful fortunes of his father and his own troubles of the past few weeks had centered in Torrento Island, and now he was a prisoner of mid-ocean, hovering with everything against him near the two ships that had come to the remote land as if mutually craving a grave.

After a career of strength, usefulness and high ambition they were decaying on a bleak shore. It was so much like the course of human life that he grew



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The modern firefighter has gone away beyond the "hand tub." Mechanics build a steam fire engine, miners dig coal to feed it, workmen build reservoirs and lay pipes so that each nozzleman and engineer is worth a score of the old-fashioned firefighters.

The big tasks of today require not only team work, but also modern tools and a vast system of supply and distribution.

The Bell telephone system is an example of co-operation between 75,000 stockholders, 120,000 employees and six million subscribers.

But to team work is added an up-to-date plant. Years of time and hundreds of millions of money have been put into the tools of the trade; into the building of a nation-wide network of lines, into the training of men and the working out of methods. The result is the Bell system of today—a union of men, money and machinery, to provide universal telephone service for ninety million people.

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References:—Mercantile Agencies or State Bank of Chicago

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You are not asked to take this treatment for a week or two before you feel its great benefits. One dose is all that is necessary to prove its wonderful powers to benefit.

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Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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GENTLE JABS.

Fly time is the season for aeroplaning.

Some people will take any old thing—except a hint.

Many a man's idea of being well dressed is a noisy necktie.

Most concerts are all right, if there are no cats in them.

A man must learn to hold his tongue if he would hold his own.

A man's relations seldom bother him if he is poorer than they are.

A woman of beauty is a joy forever—if she keeps her face closed.

No man is happier than when he is acting as his own press agent.

Some people would like to live in clover—but not the hay fever victim.

After marriage a man never admits that he was the one who proposed.

Even if a man has good sense it doesn't cut much of a figure in a love affair.

If a man dies of starvation his heirs are not apt to quarrel over his estate.

If you don't think well of your employer keep your thoughts to yourself.

You seldom hear a married man say that he never made a mistake in his life.

If a girl is unusually pretty people are apt to be surprised if she displays good sense.

It's easier to borrow from a new friend than it is to pay back what you owe an old one.

A truly great orator is one who can say the most convincing things in the fewest words.

Go to the busy bee, thou busybody, and learn this lesson: Don't butt in or you may get stung.

The honeymoon is on the wane when the bride stops telling things and begins to ask questions.

And occasionally a man who has no mind for figures occupies a front seat at a burlesque show.

Some men acquire wealth on such a small scale that they are locked up in jail on account of it.

Care is said to have killed a cat, but there is a lot of care and a lot of cats that fail to get together.

It is all right to make hay while the sun shines, but it's lots nicer to make love while the moon shines.

(Continued from page seven.)

gloomy over the idea, and only iron command of his outward display of emotions prevented him from angrily arraigning fate.

Two hours passed without bringing discoveries, though he kept the sharpest watch possible upon his surroundings. The topography of the island did not favor his desires, for the spurs of the ridge made it possible for a moving man to escape his notice, and he finally arose to walk about again.

He had moved perhaps three rods when the silence was roughly broken. A shout rang in bellow-like note, and as he turned his regard upon what seemed the quarter of the demonstration he saw a stir upon the deck of the Ursa Major.

Men were moving there rapidly, and again the shout rang out.

Barron ran forward, eager to have part in what was occurring, but as he did so he saw a human form go over the bulwark with a single leap, after which a man raced toward the ridge.

Here was chance to act as he had wished, and he pursued with vigor, but he was seen and the fugitive changed his course somewhat. Moving, he was briefly outlined against the sky, and Barron saw that he was clad like a scarecrow. Shapeless garments fluttered from his spare form, and above them was long and ragged hair.

The pursuer called out in friendly manner, assuring the runaway that he would not be harmed, but the tangled head was not turned and the man plunged into the tree-covered gloom of the bordering valley. When Barron reached the summit of the spur nobody was to be seen, and though he searched for half an hour he saw nothing further of the stranger.

Reluctantly abandoning the hunt, he made his way back to the Ursa Major, finding Eli Dodd leaning upon the bulwark.

"Oh!" exclaimed the sailor, "so it's you, this time?"

"Yes. What has happened here?"

"Burglary and riot!" snapped Eli. "I woke up to find a man leaning over me as I lay in my berth, and though it was dark as a parcel o' black cats I realized that it wasn't you. I reached out and grabbed, and I got quite a generous grip onto him, but he pulled back like a wild horse in a halter. I'm ashamed to say the fellow yanked me plumb out of the berth, and that I sprawled flat on the floor. Then he ran. The yeast wasn't all gone out of my dough, and I rose up and plied after him. I was at the foot of the companion when he got to the head of it, and when I was up he was still on deck, though going like a bullet that had pressing business. I let out a howl guaranteed to scare him fit to palsy his legs, but he didn't palsy a bit. He took a header and got away, and though I chased him a few rods I saw it was useless and came back here."

"I wish you had held on to him."

"Everybody wishes so but him."

"Of course you did not see him clearly?"

"No, and not at all in the cabin. On deck I made out that he was a man something like fifty odd years old, and a fine thing to scare off crows and cows. His hair and beard were long and snarled up like cordage with all three masts snapped and on deck in a bunch, while his clothes were that ragged you could see a thousand tatters flying."

"Anything more?"

"Not a thing, only that I don't like his way of being sociable."

"I was abroad, carrying out a prearranged plan to hunt for him by night. A murrain on the luck! If I had stayed here we might, perhaps, have captured him between us."

"I'll bet a pound to a farthing he is crazy as a raging gale."

"It is possible, though I doubt it. He has been digging recently at the grave of the Black Beak, and there is system in that. Now, it is simply fear of us that keeps him so aloof, and I am going to post notices all over the island, trying to convince him. There is writing paper in the largest stateroom, and I noticed that the ink lacked a trifle of being dried up. Come, and I'll write at once."

They went below and he secured the articles named and was bringing them to the cabin when Eli raised a shout.

"Well, if I didn't get the man I got something else. See here!"

He dangled a waist-belt of leather before Barron, mechanically tapping his fingers on the empty pockets for pistol and knife. The Virginian took the trophy.

"Lost in your struggle with him. You surely did not fail wholly. This belt is not so very old, though it has seen rough usage."

"I fancy he is not armed, or there would be weapons on the floor where I found this," Eli pursued.

"Probably."

"Pity the thing can't talk. If it could, and would delve into the history of the fellow who owned it——"

"Here's a name stamped into the leather. Probably that of the maker, but——"

He held the belt closer to the light and gazed sharply at the name. Then letters came out of the obscurity of tarnished leather and Barron started violently. Eli ran a guiding finger along as he, too, deciphered.

"The name is Clayton Barron!" he said.

The words were stolidly spoken, for they meant nothing to him, but his companion wheeled abruptly upon him, his eyes glittering strangely.

"That man," the American exclaimed, "was my father!"

CHAPTER XVI.

A STARTLING ARRIVAL.

Up to this night Barron had held back a part of his history and purposes from Eli, but after the impulsive utterance of his words at the finding of the belt he saw that the time was come to be more explicit. Eli was reliable, and he would be a more valuable aid if admitted to all of his mate's secrets.

Accordingly, he was soon in possession of the leading facts from the day when Jacob Gower stole the Virginia plantation from the Barron family until the present occasion.

"So," commented the sailor, "you think the late intruder was really Clayton Barron?"

"I am undecided. My first impression was that the discovery of the belt settled that matter, but I see room for doubt. If my father was aboard the Ursa Major when it was sacked by Captain Duke, and if he survived that butchery—both of which possibilities are open to some doubt—the belt is not conclusive evidence. I now realize that the brigantine may have drifted ashore laden with the bodies of her crew, and no living person aboard, and that the man on this island may already have been here and then secured the belt."

"From your father's lifeless body."

"Yes."

"Maybe it was so."

"My father was a bold man, and if the stranger is he we may well believe he would not lurk so long in hiding when aware that other castaways were here."

"You know my idea that the hiding man is crazy."

"Yes, but I am so doubtful of it that we will give him chance to read. I'll write a dozen notices to post at various points, assuring him that we are shipwrecked men with good will to all, and see if we can lure him near us."

The notices, briefly but skilfully expressed, were duly written, while Eli sat by and smoked thoughtfully. When Barron was at leisure again the sailor abruptly said:

"I've been studying on your theory that Mark Piper is Seagulf."

"I recall that you once expressed the belief that Piper had been a buccaneer, though you did not refer to Seagulf."

"I think I remember doing so, but I was more angry than deeply impressed, just then. Well, about Seagulf. He was as famous a pirate, all things considered, as ever sailed the oceans, and men still talk of him around the windlass and in the fok'sle. Some has it that he may have escaped death when his clipper, the Red Talon, was shot to pieces, but generally all hands claim he died. Your account is as smooth in the way of known facts and likely theories as a pane of glass. I reckon Mr. Piper is Seagulf. Pity we didn't know it when we was with him. Captain Ray would have strung him up at the yard-arm, or would have wanted to. What will you do when we get clear of this island?"

"My first duty is at Sydney, to learn about my father."

"Your first, eh? And then?"

"To find Mark Piper!"

Eli looked into the grim face and ominous eyes before him and then mentally congratulated himself that he was not the man Barron was to hunt.

In the morning the notices were posted in conspicuous places, and the hunt for the stranger was dropped until he had time to read and act for himself, unmolested. Work on the raft was deferred, for Barron did not intend to leave Torrento until its living mystery was solved. If his father was there, the possibility that his mind was unhinged made the duty of getting possession of him the more imperative.

With nothing else to do the mates began digging inside the decayed hull of the Black Beak. If treasure was there they wanted it. Eli had developed an optimistic streak, and assured Barron that they were sure to find either coined money, bullion or gems, and perhaps all three, but his comrade's mood was not sanguine.

Barron had come to doubt. The wreck had long lain upon the beach, and, remote as the island was from the regular track of merchantmen and other vessels, it seemed that somebody would likely have searched her inboard parts years previously, probably before she was covered with sand. Natives, if not white men, must then have touched at Torrento.

Still, he was willing to take one chance in many and dig.

Two nights in the Ursa Major had shown them that the sands and rain had combined to make the interior damp, so they looked for new quarters midway up the ridge, and, finding a large recess shaped like an alcove, they shifted their living place the afternoon after the stranger's invasion.

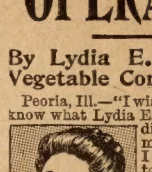
Both agreed that this was prudent for another reason. The unknown man might be merely timid, but if he had homicidal inclinations he could do them grave damage aboard ship if he saw fit.

Having gone, the brigantine was again

(Continued on page eighteen.)

SAVED FROM AN OPERATION

By Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound



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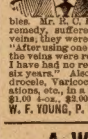

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Ben Sheldon's Love;

Or, A SCOUT OF THE PLAINS

By Ella Martin

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CHAPTER XVI.

THE RETURN OF NEKOOSA.

IT WAS dusk when they reached an altitude on a level with the cavern of Nekoosa, and near the entrenchment of the movers. They paused in the shelter of the timber and waited. When darkness set in like shadows they dispersed—they singled out till the camp was entirely surrounded, and every point leading up to it guarded. The woods were literally filled with savages, and the emigrants were utterly unconscious of their presence. Could they have known, what courage they had would have instantly departed; for a savage was a savage in their eyes, and none of them to be trusted. The very fact that they were redskins was enough to turn the hair gray of even the youngest member of the party.

And then—later, when the evening was advanced, when the hoot of the owl in the trees near by made the flesh creep; when the hot breeze of the prairie swept against the mountain forest and cooled itself in the timber—then, just when the ears of the waiting emigrants were strained to their utmost to catch the first sound of the expected war-cry, it came, breaking suddenly on the stillness of the night, sounding and resounding in the timber—a cry that curdled the blood in the veins of the listeners, who knew the end had come, though they had made what defense their means and ingenuity could devise, while entertaining no hope of coming out of the melee alive.

The men sprang to their arms at once. With desperate energy and quickness they repelled the onslaught. A round of shot from behind the embankment met the foremost savages and laid them low. But this did not stem the tide, did not stay the howling numbers that rushed on over their fallen comrades before the rifles could be reloaded.

A dark, yelping mass was in front of the barricade with a determination to swarm over it and take by storm the little band within. What use to club their rifles with a view to stemming the tide of redskins rushing upon them? What use to draw their knives and fight a hand-to-hand battle in defense of self and family? But they did it—they must die, but they would die fighting. But just at that instant, and before one of the red demons could get inside the stronghold—so well was it defended—the night air was rent with strange, savage yells. And the braves of Wind-that-Blows were hemmed in on all sides by foes of their own, on vengeance bent.

The men had time to reload now, but none dared to shoot into that struggling, howling mass of savage bodies lest in endeavoring to slay an enemy he should kill a friend. For the scout and his men were quick to understand the situation. And even the women in the cavern, who at first had nearly fainted with fright, thinking the later cries meant reinforcements for their enemies, began to realize that the tribe of Nekoosa had returned back from their journey over the mountain to meet their enemies at the very gates of the palefaces. But would it be to their benefit in the end? After the slaughter of the tribe they hated, would these savage men not turn their attention to the whites, their thirst for blood still unappeased.

They could not tell how the battle was progressing, but it seemed to the noncombatants that Greek met Greek, at least during the first part of the fight. The steady yells and dull thuds as the blows were struck came to their ears till they could no longer stand the din, and covered them with their hands to shut out the awful, sickening sound. The men outside the cavern were nauseated with the sight. It was an awful night—awful in its horror and sickening suspense. And those who witnessed it never forgot, but carried the frightful impression to the grave.

But was it Nekoosa's people to the rescue? Or was it merely savage hate wrecking vengeance, with no thought of aiding Nekoosa's paleface friends. Would their vengeance be appeased when the carnage was over, or maddened by the taste of blood, would they not rush in and massacre the whites. The men, as well as the women, threshed out this question thoroughly. However, the victory was not yet won; and none could say that the tribe of Night-Hawk would be left to decide their fate. And if Wind-that-Blows should prove the victor they might expect no mercy.

Just at this point of their reasoning the men braced up and took new courage. There would surely be only a remnant of either side left when the fight was over, and they, wearied and wounded by the fray, would be easier kept at bay.

Ben and his men had reloaded, and were waiting! but the awful carnage went on—the awful, sickening sound of death blows, and death yells, the steady chant of war-cries. It seemed for awhile as if there would never be a cessation of the horrible sounds, and that the din of battle would sound and resound forever. But gradually the terrible clamor lessened, the remaining savages of one side turned and fled with their enemies in pursuit. The wounded sang their death songs. And now only the moonlight looked down on the scene where the leaves and grass were red with savage blood, where painted and unpainted redskins lay dead or dying in close proximity to one another, regardless of their late enmity—a jumbled mass of bodies, scalped and bleeding.

From their enclosure the emigrants could not tell victor from vanquished. They waited now only to learn their own fate, and whether they must fight for their lives with the remnant of the tribe of Wind-that-Blows, or with Night-Hawk's warriors. There was silence for a while, except for the chant of the dying savages, for the survivors had withdrawn, some in flight and the others in pursuit. But after a time a score or more came rushing back—enough to strike terror to the hearts of the waiting emigrants—and at once came swarming up to the fortifications.

"Wait!" cautioned Ben, the Scout, "let no one fire till we have learned whether they are friends or foes. One shot would be like touching a match to tinder, and nothing would save us if we made a false move. There are enough redskins out there to wipe us off the face of the earth. It was not until that moment that they discovered which side was victorious. The savages that gathered in front of their retreat were not painted, and therefore belonged to the tribe of Night-Hawk.

His thoughts following Nekoosa over the mountains.

But the question was, now that these Indian were accompanied by their chief, were the movers in less danger than before?

For a few minutes there was no inclination on either side to take the initiative. The men were waiting for their guide, and Ben, the Scout, awaited the pleasure of the red men. Finally the foremost spoke:

"The Fawn," he said, "we want Nekoosa, the princess—the great chief's daughter!"

Here was a dilemma! Ben's heart nearly failed him. They demanded the princess at his hands, and he could not produce her. How was he to appease her tribe? He had supposed it to be for her own good when he let her go—and she had, proposed it. He believed she was thinking of her own safety when she asked for the pony. How could he have foreseen what was to come of it?

"The Indian princess is not here," he was obliged to inform them: "She wished to leave the camp of the palefaces before the fight took place. She would not risk being taken captive."

"It is a lie! The Fawn was not afraid! She would not doubt the prowess of her people—she would not flee from her enemies with her friends near to protect her. The dog of a paleface lies!"

The scout saw his mistake in an instant and sought to repair the damage he had done through his lack of knowledge of the Indian nature.

"I meant not so," he told them. "She is not afraid! Nekoosa, chief Night-Hawk's daughter, is brave. She slew the bear which threatened the white chief's life; and for that he has given her his pony. She has ridden away and the warriors of Night-Hawk will find her at their village when they return, rejoicing from the fight."

"The white man speaks with two tongues. The Fawn is afraid, and she is not afraid."

"The white man means not so," Ben further explained. "The Fawn is brave, but she would not hamper her people by remaining in the camp of the palefaces during the fight, though she knew the victory would be theirs. She has gone to be at the wigwams when they return, to welcome them."

His hearers were somewhat appeased, but they did not seem satisfied. They talked together in their own tongue—a language the scout partly understood, but the undertones of the speakers did not reach him distinctly.

"Tell me one thing," he said, when the few conferring together again looked up. "Is Wind-that-Blows slain? It is easy to see that the braves of Night-Hawk have conquered their enemies and ours. It is well. And the warriors are great who have taken the scalp of the half-breed chief and his men!"

Thus Ben sought to learn if Wind-that-Blows had escaped, hoping, yet dreading to hear of his death; for after all, he was partly of his own race.

"Night-Hawk's men are brave warriors," said one, "but squaws could conquer the dogs of palefaces who live by the mountain. It was easy for our chief to take the scalp of the boastful Wind-that-Blows, and it now hangs at his girdle. It is well, for he had taken prisoner the great chief's daughter, and we did not know until today that she lived. The great Night-Hawk, who never sleeps, has gone with some of his warriors to the village of tepees. He will kill the men who escaped up when they return, and he will take prisoners the squaws and young children, and burn the village. Their tribe shall be no more, and no more shall there be a village of tepees in the elbow of the mountain. It is well."

Ben Sheldon drew a sigh of relief, though saddened in his heart that it must needs be. Yes, it was well for emigrants in general, and themselves in particular, that the tribe of Wind-that-Blows was no more. However, he had little time to ponder the situation, for the Indians returned to the subject of Nekoosa. He must conciliate them. He had no longer anything to fear from his old enemies; they were reaped down like the stubble, and the place that knew them in all their pride and power would know them no more forever. And he had had no hand in it. For that he was glad. They had brought about their own destruction by making war on another tribe unprovoked.

Again he explained, as best he could and at more length, the reason for the departure of their princess.

"We will wait here for our chief," they said, when he had concluded. "He will want the Fawn restored to him."

"The Fawn will be found at the wigwams of her people," Ben again replied.

"We will send after her when the chief returns. If she is found she will speak for herself, whether she is a friend of the whites."

Here was another dilemma, or the

(Continued on page twelve.)

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Retort by Diaz.

An American engineer from Mexico City was talking about Diaz.

"Diaz has a dry humor," he said. "Mexico, however, is not a dry land. They drink pulque there, a drink made from the cactus, which looks like milk and tastes like vinegar. Three glasses of pulque will make a Sunday school superintendent walk thirty miles through a blizzard to murder his wife and children.

"No, Mexico is not dry. One day a Mexican statesman arrived at Diaz's an hour late for luncheon. He apologized in a thick voice.

"'The fault,' he said, 'lies with my automobile.'

"'But, friend,' said Diaz, 'don't you know that an automobile is run by gasoline, not by alcohol?'"

William Upbraids Sergeant.

William had thrown down his spade and shovel and had "gone to be a soldier." The recruiting sergeant had painted such an academy picture of the joys of army life that existence up at the farm seemed very dull and tedious by comparison.

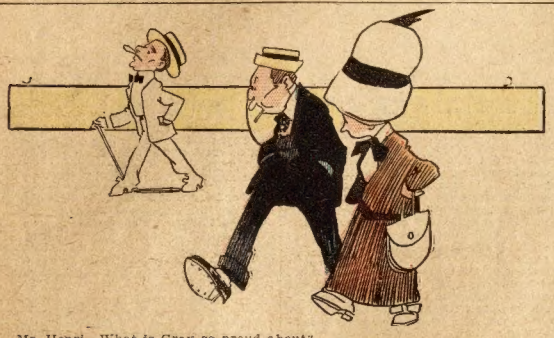
But the realization fell very short of the anticipation. In fact, while William was being whipped into shape, his mind grew terribly jumbled and he wished he had never left his old friends the spade and shovel.

"Right turn!" cried the sergeant. William turned to the left. When the sergeant cried "Left turn!" he turned to the right.

At last flesh could stand it no longer. In a frenzy of exasperation William faced the badgering drillmaster and exclaimed:

"Look here, sergeant. Tha doesna' know thy own mind for two minutes together. Tell us which way tha wants us to turn, and ha' done wi't!"

TICKLISH



Mr. Henri—What is Gray so proud about?
Mrs. Henri—He just broke all speed records for making ice cream in their new freezer.

Unanswerable.

Monty Mollycoddle closed the window. Freddie Freshair opened it. Then they frowned at each other.

"Do you mind lowering the window, old chap," said Monty. "This weather's exceedingly treacherous, and on these chilly evenings one can't be too careful."

"On the contrary," retorted Freddie, "one can kill oneself with care."

"Yes! but it's easier to kill oneself with a draught," observed Monty.

"Nonsense!" replied Freddie. "Look at all these modern cranks and compare them with our splendid ancestors. They don't stand comparison! And our ancestors didn't take medicines, or stay in stuffy rooms, or bind their necks with woolen comforters when they went out."

"I know they didn't," answered Monty. "And where are they now, old chap? All dead!"

A Color Transition.

An aged colored man was engaged in burning the grass off the lawn of a young broker when the latter returned to his home, and, thinking to have some fun with the old man, said:

"Sambo, if you burn that grass the entire lawn will be as black as you are."

"Dat's all right, suh," replied the negro. "Some o' dese days dat grass grow up an' be as green as youh are."—Judge.

Couldn't Suit Both.

Mrs. Spinks—Yes, I wish to hire a servant girl. Do you like dogs?

Applicant—No, mum.

Mrs. Spinks—Then you won't do.

Applicant—Please, mum, when I told Mr. Spinks I hated dogs, and 'u'd like to kill every one, he said I'd just suit.

Got 'Em Mixed.

Policeman (to clubman returning home late)—Here, you can't open that door with that; it's your cigar.

Clubman—Great Scott! Then I have smoked my latchkey!

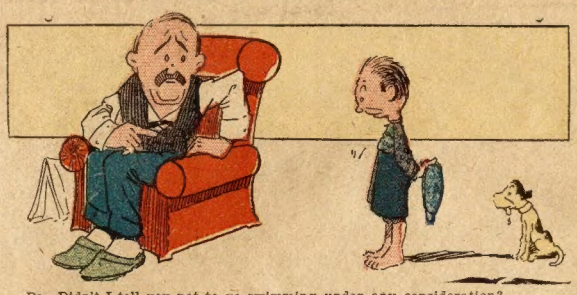
The Caller—We've just bought a spanking team.

Little Jamie—We have one, too. They're pa and ma.

Willing.

"What do you think of reciprocity?"

"I'm in favor of it. I got my wife from Canada and am dead willing to give her back."



Pa—Didn't I tell you not to go swimming under any consideration?
Little Willie—I didn't pa; I went under the old red bridge.

Self-Sacrifice.

A story is told of a Rangeley Lakes guide who, while working on a log drive, fell into the water.

He struggled for awhile, and at last, dizzy and nearly exhausted, managed to grasp a big log and hold on to it.

The current was so strong and swift that it carried his body under the log until his feet stuck out on the other side.

Just as a comrade grasped him by the shoulder he caught sight of his own feet protruding on the other side of the log.

"I can't hold on a bit longer!" he gasped. "Save the poor fellow that's in headfirst, if you can."

Again the Exception.

The school teacher was trying to illustrate the difference between plants and animals.

"Plants," she explained, "are not susceptible of attachment to man as animals are."

"How about burrs, teacher?" piped a small boy who had passed the summer in the country.

Under Certain Conditions.

Maud—Would you call Gerty Goldbags a beauty?

May—Well, p'raps I might if I were a young man, awfully poor, in debt and utterly conscienceless.

A Confirmed Pessimist.

"Poor crops, I hear."

"On the contrary, the harvests in the fall will be bountiful."

"Then there will be a car famine."

Belonged to Father.

Every one knew Jonathan Skinflint as a millionaire, with the exception, so it appeared, of Skinflint himself. He invariably wore the shabbiest of clothes and is reported to have dined one day on a couple of peas and a grape skin.

One day an old friend endeavored to persuade the miser to dress better. "I am surprised," he said, "that you should let yourself become so shabby."

"But I am not shabby," expostulated Skinflint.

"Oh, yes, you are," replied the friend. "Remember your father. He was always neatly, even elegantly, dressed. His clothes were very handsome."

Skinflint gave utterance to a hearty laugh. "Why," he shouted triumphantly, "these clothes I've got on were father's."

A Great Convenience.

"You have placed all the large berries on top!"

"Yes," replied the affable dealer. "That saves you the trouble of hunting through the box for them."

They Were Occupied.

"Did you get on your knees when you proposed?"

"No, the girl I proposed to was using them."

Fine Prospects.

"Has she any prospects?"

"I should say she has. She knows a millionaire that she expects to marry or sue for breach of promise."

After the Facts.

As a small boy was standing on one of the best library chairs and clawing with his grubby hands some of the choicest bindings in the bookcase, his progenitor entered suddenly and cried rather sharply: "What are you doing at that bookcase, Wilfred?"

"Trying to find the history of the United States, father."

"What for?"

"Why, Joe Billings, at our school, says Mike Donlin played with the Giants year before last, and I say he didn't."

Gladys—He asked me to marry him and said he got $40 a week. I know for a fact he gets $60.

Edith—He must have been married before.

Out of All Reason.

"That new family next door borrowed our ax again this morning."

"When his wife told him this Jones was peeved."

"Well, why did you lend it to them?" he complained.

"How can I help it?"

"You might have given them some kind of an excuse."

Mrs. Jones waxed sarcastic.

"Yes," she snapped, "I might have told them that you were going to use it—or some other crazy, impossible thing."

A Horrifying Spectacle.

Stranger—Merciful heavens! Phwat's thot?

Resident—That is a policeman.

"Thot Dootchman?"

"Yes. He's a German."

"A Dootch policeman! Phwin does th' nixt train I'ave fur somewhere ilse?"

A Bad Beginning.

Mother—What! Do you mean to tell me that during your wedding tour you mended your husband's clothes? My! my! What could have possessed you?

Bride—Dear me! What's the matter?

Mother—You foolish girl! Now he'll expect you to keep on doing it.

Exercise.

"What you want to do," said the physician, "is to take more exercise."

"In that case, I think I'll go fishing."

"No. What you want is physical exercise. Not exercise of the imagination."

Honesty.

"What's the worst advice you ever got?"

"A friend told me to use my own judgment."

Mrs. Balker—How did you get Henry to buy your new hat?
Mrs. Wingo—I told him that if he didn't I'd go out in one of his.

The Ultimate Limit.

First Dentist—My work is so painless that my patients often fall asleep while I am at their teeth.

Second Dentist—That's nothing. Mine all want to have their pictures taken to catch the expression of delight on their faces.

The Crusty Bachelor.

"George Ade was persuaded, back in 1906," said a Chicago editor, "to address a class of sweet girl graduates in white. He amused the girls, if he didn't edify them.

"He told them, for one thing, to take no stock in crusty bachelors like himself. He said that bachelors were all wrong in their ideas about women. He instance a bachelor to who his little niece once sang:

"'I know something I won't tell!'

"'Never mind, dear,' said the crusty bachelor. 'You'll get over that habit as you grow older.'"

"And were you born in India?"
"I was."
"What part?"
"All of me, of course."

Hate Has Limits.

He— Do you still feel angry with me?

She—I despise you! I abhor you! I hate you!

He—Then perhaps you'd better break your engagement to accompany me to the opera.

She—Oh, I don't hate you so much as that.

A Lucky Woman.

Mrs. Brainie—After ten years of married life, my husband still says I'm an angel.

Friend—Does he mean it?

Mrs. Brainie—Of course not; but I think I'm mighty lucky to have a husband who pretends to mean it.

Generous.

"John, that man next door came over here today and offered to tune little Lucy's piano."

"Great! Did you let him do it?"

"No, dear. He wanted to tune it with an axe!"

Miss Binks—Did he get his money honestly?

Mr. Jinks—Well, he told a plain heiress he loved her for herself alone.

Golden Rule Goes Awry.

A little boy did a naughty thing the other day. He got a hatchet and chopped of the tail of the family cat. His mother punished him severely for the barbarous act, and then she tried conscientiously to make him comprehend its enormity.

"Bernard," she said, "what is the Golden Rule?"

"'Do unto others what you would have others do unto you,'" he quoted glibly.

"And did you follow the Golden Rule when you tortured that poor cat?"

"I sure did mamma. If I had a tail wouldn't I want somebody to cut it off?"

Where the Crowd Goes.

Julie—Where are you going this summer, dear?

Marie—Mahoosic beach.

Julie—Why, my dear, there are no eligible men there!

Marie—No, but there will be as soon as it's known I'm around.

Papa's Kick.

"Mabel, what are that young man's intentions?"

"I don't know, papa; he is keeping me in the dark."

"That is the reason I am asking. Tell him not to turn down the light any more when he calls."

Proud of His Coin.

"Sir," said the haughty aristocrat, who was as proud as he was poor, "you ought to be proud of the fact that I even recognize you."

"I am," rejoined the self-made man. "It shows that I have money."

Laying Him Out.

Marks—I hear that Jaggman was so drunk last night that three of you fellows had to carry him into his house. Did his wife think he was dead?

Parks—She must have. She was laying him out when we left.

Anything but Hats.

Girls of bygone days wore hats;
Think of it—the stupid flats!
Styles so simple and so crude
We have hurled to desuetude;
Nowadays upon their heads
Women carry feather beds,
Footballs, flower pots, laundry bags,
Bales of feathers or of rags;
Helmets, pieplates, butter tubs,
Jungle growths or tree and shrubs;
Dishpans, saucepans, jardinieres,
Sofa cushions, flights of stairs;
Baskets, green and pink and brown,
Right side up and upside down;
Pyramids and Eiffel towers,
Garden plots and gorgeous flowers.
Baskets, barrels, hives and bees,
Boxes meant for fruit or cheese;
Drying frames with wire and slats,
Anything, in short, but hats.

Why Justice Didn't Warn.

An Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Patagascar was sitting by a river.

"I wish to cross," said a traveler. "Would it be lawful to use this boat?"

"It would," was the reply; "it is my boat."

The traveler thanked him, and rowed away, but the boat sank and he was drowned.

"Heartless man!" said an indignant spectator. "Why did you not tell him that your boat had a hole in it?"

"The matter of the boat's condition," said the great jurist, "was not brought before me."

She Hadn't Forgotten.

A young woman who forgets faces very easily and is painfully conscious of so doing, was riding in an open car one summer day. She felt a hand on her shoulder and heard a voice saying: "I beg your pardon, but you have forgotten——"

"Oh, not at all; I remember you very well," hastily interrupted the other, whereas the lady of the hand at once straightened up, and, in a most frigid tone, said: "I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, but you have forgotten to button your waist."

Guessed His Profession.

"Can you tell me where your husband went?" asked the bill collector.

"No," replied the anxious-looking woman.

"Or when he will be back?"

"No."

"But you're sure he will be back sometime?"

"Not entirely."

"Well," remarked the collector wearily, "if the firm takes my advice this is the last time it will extend credit to an aviator."

One, at Least.

She—You are just like all men; you would not admit that you ever made a mistake to save your life.

He—As if I hadn't told you time and time again that the mistake of my life was in marrying you.

Untold Wealth.

"You say he has untold wealth?"

"Hasn't filed a tax statement for years."—Exchange.

Waller—Smiley thinks I won't pay him that ten. The idea!

Higley—How absurd of him! Doesn't he know it?

A Mere Detail.

"Dr. Deepsearch is a wonderful man. He has discovered over thirty new diseases."

"Can he cure them all?"

"Oh, no. He leaves that for some one else to do."

Faulty Old Proverb.

Singleton—Do you believe in the old adage about marrying in haste and repenting at leisure?

Wedderly—No, I don't. After a man marries he has no leisure.

Encouragement.

"Miss Emma, I love you."

"Well, now you are down on your knees you may as well tie my shoelaces."

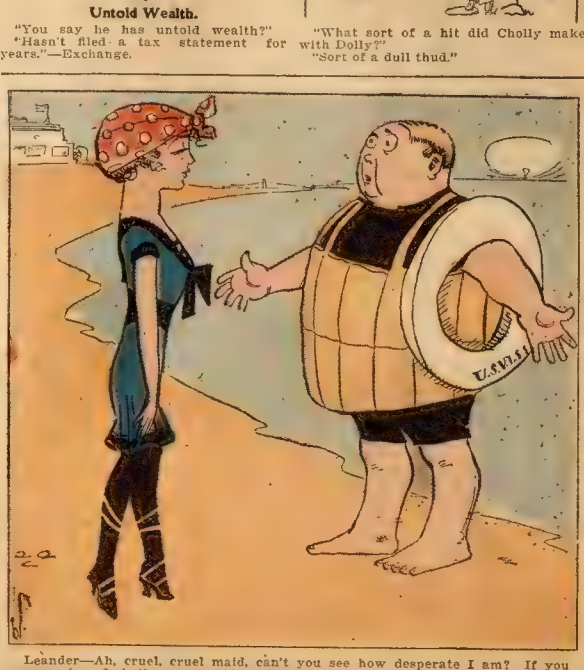
Why Divorce Is So Common.

He—If you weren't in love with Jack, why did you marry him?

She—Because all the other girls were.

"What sort of a hit did Cholly make with Dolly?"

"Sort of a dull thud."



Leander—Ah, cruel, cruel maid, can't you see how desperate I am? If you spurn my love I shall cast myself in the water.

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Ben Sheldon's Love.

(Continued from page nine.)

same one accentuated; and Ben foresaw trouble. They would be obliged to stop where they were in uncertainty of how it would all end till Nekoosa had been found and brought back—and she had gone after the fugitives. None could tell when or where she would be found. Night-Hawk, on his arrival might order them all taken prisoners, with a view to possessing himself of the horses and firearms. Had they escaped one danger only to find themselves confronted by another of no less magnitude? And was Nekoosa, who had saved his life, to prove their undoing, after all? Wind-that-Blows and his tribe were blown away like the chaff, but he could not see that the condition of the emigrants was much bettered.

While the scout was puzzling his brain over the problem that now confronted him, a horse came slowly into the moon-lighted space in front of the barricade, and was reined in at his very feet. The rider was Nekoosa, and in her train were fully three score of her tribe.

Ben Sheldon was startled, scout though he was. Had Nekoosa betrayed him? She had gone ostensibly to follow and aid Jack and Myrtle. And now she appeared with warriors enough to overwhelm them; and he had unwittingly furnished her with the means to accomplish it quickly.

"The Fawn! the Fawn!" cried those who had demanded her of him. "It is Nekoosa, the princess! the great chief, Night-Hawk's daughter!"

Evidently, her influence over them was powerful, and her wish would be their law. But what was her pleasure? Was she friend or foe? He at once sought an answer to that question.

"Speak! oh, princess!" he demanded. "What is your will?"

CHAPTER XVII.

JACK AND MYRTLE AGAIN.

It is one thing to start out stout-hearted and another to retain that undaunted spirit through hardships and obstacles unlooked for. The two young people who had left the emigrant camp because safety lay not there, either for themselves or the others, rode on into the close August night, grateful for the fresh breeze that occasionally swept over the prairie. They were following as well as might be the directions Ben, the Scout, had given them. Both were weary, but neither thought rest possible till the night had passed.

"I wonder," ventured Myrtle, "if we shall be able to find shelter from the sun's rays tomorrow. We will be greatly in need of rest by that time, and we ought not to stop in the open, for there are other savages in this country, I suppose. Say, Jack, how fortunate it would be if those two unfriendly tribes of Indians should meet and annihilate each other before Wind-that-Blows could reach the movers."

"Yes, fortunate for the movers, I certainly hope something will intervene to save them," Jack said with a sigh. "As for us, we are safe from the wrath of my brother chief; for he will never believe we have continued the journey without a guide. And that suggests to me the idea that we can better rest here where there is still some timber in which to find shelter from the prying eyes of redskins who might chance to be on the prairie. Over there I see a clump of trees. Let us ride in that direction and see if it will do for a place to camp. I will find a place to spread your blanket, and while you sleep I will keep guard."

"We will change about, then; for you need rest as well as I. But we will stop now, for I believe we shall feel safer to sleep in the night, and where there are some trees to screen us. We will bait the horses in the morning and give them some of the grain in the saddle bags, and then they will be fresh also. And we will ride away, straight toward the pioneer settlement, and leave all danger behind."

Myrtle was sanguine, and he let her talk; he did not want to depress her spirits by speaking of the danger from prairie wolves, or timber wolves—one was as likely as the other here, for they were between the forest and the prairie, as it were, and each had dangers peculiar to itself.

They dismounted in the shade of a clump of trees, and in the deepest shadow he made the girl a comfortable couch. He then went to attend to the horses. Myrtle had scarcely touched her head to the folded blanket before she was sound asleep.

As soon as Jack Dutton was convinced that she was asleep he began to gather brushwood and pile it into a great heap for a bonfire in case they should be scented out by wolves. For in one of the scout's campfire stories he had told of an all night battle with the dreaded prairie wolf, when bonfires alone had kept the beasts at bay, till the morning dawned and put them to flight. He meant to be prepared for every emergency. For he alone could defend Myrtle now.

Logs and sticks and pineknots, and even leaves he gathered into a big heap ready to be lighted if necessary. At the first sound he would fire the heap and bring Myrtle into the circle of light. The horses were already where the glow from the bonfire would fall upon and protect them. And his rifle was handy, leaning against a tree near by.

Somehow he divined that danger was near, for the responsibility of taking Myrtle through oppressed him. But little did he dream for what purpose he had gathered the brushwood.

He was beginning to feel the need of rest himself, but dared not fling himself onto the ground for repose, lest he should unwittingly fall asleep. He must keep awake, he dared not sleep.

He paced back and forth, keeping out of the moonlight that flooded all unsheltered places, that no enemy might espy him, but still keeping close enough to ignite the brush, should the lone howl of a wolf preface the combined yelp of the whole pack.

Why did Jack Dutton's mind keep dwelling upon the danger from prairie wolves when human wolves were far more plentiful? He had never felt so cowardly before, and he attributed it to the fact that he had usually been with others of his kind in times of danger in lieu of being left with all the responsibility on his own shoulders.

He paused in his walk and listened. He thought he heard the girl stir. He must be growing nervous. Surely that was a sound in Myrtle's direction. He expected to hear her voice cautiously calling to him. What he did hear the next second was a stifled shriek. He knew it was Myrtle who had attempted that shriek, and that the sound had been smothered by a savage hand being placed over her mouth. He sprang forward, his hand on the helve of his hunting knife.

He knew now it was not the prairie wolf, which he had feared, that had taken them by surprise. The four-footed beasts gave warning; but this semblance of a human being, the uncivilized Indian, had crept upon them unawares, and only the stifled scream of the victim warned him that danger he had scented from afar, as it were, had overtaken them.

What he would encounter he did not know when he sprang into the denser shadow cast by the cluster of trees under which Myrtle had sought repose, but he went undaunted to her rescue. A blow met him—a blow on the head, delivered from the darkness; and for a time he knew nothing of what was going on around him. The blow was from an Indian club.

When he recovered consciousness he beheld the pile of brush he had gathered on fire, and by its light he discerned his sweetheart bound to a tree, and the loose brush he had kept for a reserve to replenish the fire from time to time as it should be needed, he noticed was being piled at the feet of the shrinking girl by two painted savages.

He could not grasp all that it meant to them just at first, for his head still hurt him; but as his mind became clearer he divined the purpose of the redskins. They were to be burnt at the stake—tortured by fire. And it was for this he had gathered the fuel—for this! And he had worked so hard to do it—worked when he needed rest; and all with a view of warding off a possible danger. He himself was bound to another tree, and powerless to aid the girl he loved. He struggled furiously with his bonds, but to no purpose; and all he could do was to cast lightning-like glances—glances that would have killed as surely as an arrow of a redskin if glances had power to slay—at the two hideously painted beings. And in using so much forethought, all with a view to warding off a danger possible—whether probable or not, he did not know—he had made everything easy for these red demons to accomplish. It was just possible they never would have thought of torturing their victims by fire had not the pile of brushwood, ready to their hand, suggested it to them. He fancied the eyes of Myrtle Wayne looked reproachfully at him, though he knew she was not aware of how the brushpile came into being.

And now the red demons began to carry wood to place at his own feet. They were to share the same fate, and they could only look at each other across the distance, which was not great, with horror-filled eyes.

And it was for this they left the camp of the emigrants, which was considered a place unsafe for them—this was the one chance they had had for their lives, while the others were sure to be massacred! This was the fate Ben had sent them forth to meet! They would rather have died fighting with their companions by their side.

Jack could not speak as he looked across at Myrtle, his voice choked as he tried to call her name.

"Jack!" she cried shrilly, and her voice rose clear and penetrating on the night air. "Jack! good-by!"

It was time she spoke if she wished to say that last word to him, for one of the savages had lighted a torch and was advancing to the brushpile at her feet. He tried to answer, but his voice died away in his throat, his tongue seemed paralyzed, and no sound would issue from his tense lips.

This was the way he had protected her—this!

The horses were neighing and screaming with fright, they were too near the burning brushheap. Their stamping and rearing had for a time drowned the sound of approaching hoofbeats. But now they were near—too near to escape the ears of Jack Dutton, who heard and prayed—yes, prayed, though he had never done so before in all his life—prayed for succor for himself and Myrtle Wayne.

The sound came nearer; it was louder now, and Myrtle heard the thumping of horses' hoofs and looked at Jack hopefully. The savages heard it and paused to listen. The one who bore the burning torch was almost in the act of stooping to ignite the brush at Myrtle's feet. One little second and it would have been too late to save the life of Myrtle Wayne. Had the brush once been lighted no power on earth could have stayed the flames in time to save the girl's life.

But just as the redskin paused to take in the meaning of the sound, a crack of a rifle cleft the air, and the savage who held the torch leaped from the ground, his death-cry sounding through the night. The lighted torch fell from his hand at a safe distance from the pile of sticks at Myrtle's feet, and after burning brightly for a time, smoldered and went out.

The remaining redskin took to flight, but the rescuer who had ridden into their midst flung the discharged rifle to the ground, and snatched Jack's from where it leaned against a tree, and dashed away in pursuit, leaving the two captives all bound as they were and still helpless, but not now despairing, for they had recognized the horse and its rider.

"Thank heaven!" Jack exclaimed, "my rifle is loaded. Myrtle, we are saved!"

He could speak now that the worst of the danger was over; but Myrtle could

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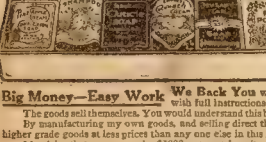

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not. She was weaker than before, the relief was so great, and she could not utter a sound.

They waited in silence and suspense for the crack of a rifle; and it came as they had expected, and the death-yell followed it. Then they listened again, and waited, this time for the sound of a horse's feet. They came leisurely now, as there was less need of speed; but presently horse and rider halted within the light of the bonfire.

"So perish the last of the tribe of Wind-that-Blows," said Nekoosa calmly, as she slipped from the saddle of the horse Ben, the Scout, had given her—his own horse, and the one he had used to ride ahead of the wagon-train. And this was what his gift had enabled her to do. Ben never regretted that gift.

The first act of the Indian girl was to cut the bonds of our two friends, who thanked and blessed her. Jack pressed her hands and Myrtle wept on her shoulder.

"You spoke of these as being the last of the tribe of Wind-that-Blows," Jack said. "Has there been a fight, then? And were they conquered?"

"Oh, yes," replied Nekoosa easily. "My tribe has conquered them. These two only were left, and the daughter of Night-Hawk has slain them. No more will they be a people."

In reality, as the reader knows, the Indian girl knew only what a faith in the prowess of her tribe told her; for she had left the camp of the emigrants before the fight took place, and started on the trail of the fugitives. The bonfire had led her in the right direction, and later she had seen their need afar and ridden like mad to reach the place in time to save them. She knew at once from the warlike appearance of the savages that they belonged to the enemies of her tribe. She rightly divined that these had been put to rout, and by chance had come upon the couple, and being bound to wreck vengeance on some one, had been on the point of putting their late captives to death with the means ready to their hand. She believed, and rightly, that they were the only remaining warriors of the late Wind-that-Blows.

"Come!" she said to the ones she had rescued. "We will go back to your friends. They are safe. The great Night-Hawk swooped down upon his enemies before they could reach the palefaces. It is well."

Believing the Indian girl knew whereof she was speaking, the two turned back, with her in the lead, to join their party. Jack could not gainsay the decision of the Fawn that it was well. Still, the tie of blood was strong, and he sorrowed for the brother whom Fate had placed in the environment of savage birth and savage customs.

On their way back to the emigrant camp they were joined by a large number of the Indian girl's tribe. They came upon the riders unexpectedly, appearing like shadows from the darkness of the mountain slope. At sight of them Myrtle nearly fainted, but the young princess reassured her, and spoke to her people in their own language. Then, with the redskins preceding them, they continued on their way.

When they reached the hollow in the mountain, Nekoosa rode to the front. And then it was that Ben Sheldon, the Scout, seeing the princess at the head of her company thought she had betrayed him to her tribe, who would consider the movers and their goods their legitimate prey. It was at this juncture the victorious warriors who had demanded her of Ben sent forth their cry of greeting at her appearance.

She answered their greeting. Then she said to Ben: "I have brought back the Star-of-the-Night and her brave." And Myrtle and Jack rode forward at a sign from the Fawn. "I knew it would be safe, for something told me our enemies and yours are no more. Nekoosa and her people are friends of the white chief who saved the princess' life when she was starving in the old cave where he found her."

The scout clasped the hands of the two who were restored to him, and again thanked Nekoosa and her braves. And then Jack told how the Indian princess had ridden the scout's steed to the rescue.

"I am doubly glad I gave her the horse now," Ben said. "How fortunate it is she and her tribe are so grateful for her rescue from the cave where she was hiding."

With a feeling of security for the first time since Myrtle Wayne was taken prisoner, the movers lay down to rest with the two delinquents, forgiven now, within the shelter of the camp.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PEACE AND SAFETY AT LAST.

Grateful indeed were the one-time fugitives for the rest and shelter afforded them. Wearied with the tramp across the mountain, and then the ride out toward the plain, Myrtle and Jack slept soundly for the first time since the former's capture.

It was not long till daylight now, and though the travelers felt the few hours rest inadequate, they were all stirring with peep of dawn, anxious to leave the bloody field of the late battle. The women would not venture outside of the entrenchment till they were taken out in the covered wagons, for they could guess of the horrible sight that would meet their eyes.

Jack Dutton said nothing to any one, but as soon as there was light sufficient for his task he went forth and sought till he found the remains of the chief, the great Wind-that-Blows, whose greatness was no more. He made a grave beneath some trees, and covered the body, first with earth and then with a pile of stones, that the beasts of the forest might not disturb the sleeper beneath.

And it was for this he had journeyed across the plains—for this he had inadvertently caused the halt of the wagon-train near the village where he reigned! It saddened him, but he could not doubt but the fate of his illstarred brother would have been the same had he never passed that way; and his mission here had only been to give him burial—the only one out of that luckless tribe to receive it.

Nekoosa and her followers accompanied the wagons till they came to the trail that led off around the mountains to their wigwams, and here the two parties took leave of one another in as imposing and impressive a manner as the occasion called for, and then continued their journey in separate ways. And though the movers did not doubt the word and good will of Nekoosa, still they felt easier when they had parted from their escort of savages.

Ere long they reached the spot where Jack and Myrtle had camped and were subsequently rescued by Nekoosa from a death of torture at the stake. An explanation had to be given to the party, who shuddered at the narrow escape of the twain.

"We owe a good deal to the Indian girl and her influence," Ben said, reflectively, his thoughts following Nekoosa over the mountain slope to the tepee of her tribe, a pang of pity in his heart for the lot in life Fate had ordained her.

The two Indians that had lived and prospered by the hermit's cave, were found upon the ground where the Fawn's well-aimed bullets had laid them; and the caravan went on and left them there for the jackals to feed upon.

The rest of the journey, except for a few false alarms, which were most trying to the overstrained nerves of the movers, and the fear of an attack from prairie wolves that never materialized, was uneventful. And after a time they reached the settlement on the frontier where Ben's boyhood friends had resided since his first trip across the plain ten years ago.

There was a town there now, a thriving place, for the broad acres surrounding it were cultivated by an industrious lot. Their homes were primitive affairs, to be sure, built of logs and shingled with bark; for here in the wilderness where the early emigrants settled the land had to be cleared and the ground broken before it could be tilled. And it was still a new country. They had left the Indians far behind and had no need of a block house or a fort with soldiers like the settlement from which they came. They had built a log church, here in the wilderness when first they came, and here they gathered for worship once a week. They were a neighborly and sociable people; and here in this new country everybody was happy.

These residents of an earlier emigration welcomed the newcomers, who were glad to reach their journey's end. There were acres and acres of land farther on that would in time make as good farms as those already cultivated. And a number of the movers had friends and relatives already settled there.

Jack Dutton and Myrtle Wayne were married without delay, and about a year later, when he had got a start, as he called it, on the land he had staked out, Harold Lane wedded his sister's friend, Edith Baldwin.

We cannot wait till Ben, the Scout, is married before ending this story. It is too long a stay in proceedings, but we will anticipate enough to say that he married Hazel, the daughter of Hal Wilson and the woman who was once Hazel King, the friends with whom he made his first trip across the plains; and with whom he made his charges acquainted by recitals of his boyhood adventures whenever he was in the story-telling mood, and no danger lurked near to distract his thoughts from the past. But he had to wait a number of years for the little lass to come to a suitable age. And so he went back over the trail he had come, for the purpose of guiding other home-seekers to the frontier.

We are not going to tell the reader where the hermit's cave is located. Passing through the well-kept farms, with their up-to-date buildings, one would never guess that here was once the home of the wild Indian tribes who were the terror of emigrants en route to the far west.

The Indians have long since been relegated to the reservation, and the prairies taken up by home-seekers who went not so far west; and well-kept farms were made out of what was then waste land. There is a city now not many miles distant from where stood the village of tepees, where Ben Sheldon, the Scout, had his first and last experience in seeking the liberation of white people captured by Indians. A railroad runs through this city, and travelers who think nothing now of the trip, as they ride in their palace cars, little guess of the hazardous journeys

(Continued on page eighteen.)

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CHAPTER IV.

ON THE BRINK OF THE RUN.

PEG TUGWELL became restless after a short time and declared to Jill that he meant to follow the buckboard and see for himself what new rascality the Hardridge foreman was up to.

"I'd rather you wouldn't go out tonight, Peg," said his sister.

"But, by cracky, I can't rest easy the way things are," returned the fat boy. "I know something about this fellow Gragdon; he's hated by every man who works under him; he's up to some mischief you may be sure, to come down all the way from the shanties to call back the boy he discharged without pay."

Peg got up and donned his cap.

"If this man is such a scamp, Peg, he may resent your interference," suggested the girl.

"What of that?" and the fat boy laughed lightly. "I like to have a hand in these little rumpuses."

With that Peg whirled through the door and was gone. Jill ran after, calling:

"Don't stop away long, Peg."

"All right, sis," came back to her ear, as the boy rushed away in the darkness. The boy knew the trail better than a hound on the scent of his quarry.

He passed along the dim road with the fleet foot of a deer. He had not gone far when the sound of clattering hoofs startled and halted him.

"A runaway as sure as shooting!" exclaimed Peg.

The boy caught up a limb from the ground and with a loud "whoa!" swung his stick across the road. The frightened horse fell back upon his haunches; Peg quickly secured the snorting animal, hastily examining the vehicle to find that, though considerably damaged, it was yet not wholly put out of service.

"Something's happened sure as the dickens!" ejaculated the fat boy.

His fear was that both the foreman and his boy passenger had been dashed to death along the stony road.

Peg, a good horseman, having the runaway under control, drove at a sharp trot up the Roaring Run wagon trail.

Meantime Ralph Overton struggled under the hand of a strong man, who again demanded to know what he had done with Gil Gragdon. What indeed, but to send him plunging to his death in the wild gulch. The boy trembled with dire alarm.

"Are you Ralph Overton?" demanded the boy's captor at length.

"Ye—es," admitted our hero.

"What were you doing out here? I am sure I heard a cry and the dash of hoofs. Where is Gragdon, boy?"

"I—I don't know," stammered the frightened lad, his teeth chattering.

"That's a lie; you pushed him into the gulch!"

"I—I didn't mean to, sir. He—"

"That will do. Come with me," and the man dragged Ralph out to the road.

Here the man halted, listening to the far-off pounding of hoofs, the rattle of wheels on the flinty road.

"Some one is coming," said the man. His captive heard the sound too and wondered. The boy was sick at heart over his adventure of the night. Although he was not very much to blame, the thought that the ugly foreman had been killed by his hands quite distracted

A scared question in her big brown eyes.

the already greatly troubled chore-boy.

Peg halted when he came alongside a man clutching a boy by the arm.

"Hello!" called the fat boy.

"Ah, it's you is it, Peg?" said the man. "I am glad of it. You will drive me to camp, where I can look into this little scrape this youngster has got into."

"I'll drive you up to your camp all right, Mr. Villaindon," returned the fat youth. "This horse is yours, anyhow, I reckon. I caught him down here a ways, where he was running away. I think Gil Gragdon was at my home with this rig earlier in the evening. Is that you, Ralph?"

"Yes," said the captive, "Let me go, please, sir," addressing his last words to the timber owner.

"Not yet," returned the rich man. "I shall first find out all about what you have been doing. I sent my foreman up to fetch you back to camp, not imagining that you could be so vindicative as to try to murder him when chance offered. This is a case for the officers of the law."

"What is that?" quickly asked Peg, who had but an inkling of what had actually occurred.

"My foreman, Mr. Gragdon, has been killed—"

"Is it possible?" gasped the startled Peg. "The horse threw him—"

"No, no," quickly uttered the timber owner. "It is this boy who did it."

"Ralph Overton?"

"That is the name he goes by here, but I have reason to believe it is an assumed one. I believe he is Ratty, an escaped House of Correction chap. I thought my foreman hasty in discharging the boy, so I sent him out to recall him, with an offer of increased wages. For all his pains, Gragdon meets his death."

"But Ralph wouldn't hurt a mouse," and the fat boy laughed derisively.

"That remains to be seen," coldly answered the man. "I happened along in time to see boy and man on the brink of the Run. Overton pushed Gragdon and he fell into the abyss. No man could go down there and live."

"Served him right," muttered Peg under his breath. Aloud he only said:

"Well, old man, if you want my help to get back to the shanty, jump in."

The three were soon moving up the grade, the horse going at a lively trot.

The shanties were nearly all dark when our trio drove into the open space between the cook and bunk shanties.

"You may put out the horse, Peg. I will attend to this fellow," swinging his prisoner into the road as he spoke.

"All to the good, old man," returned the fat boy.

He managed to lean over to the drooping head of his late guest, whispering:

"Keep your upper lip stiff, old chap. I'll see you through."

Ralph realized that in this strange fat boy of the grass flats he had found a genuine friend. The orphan's heart sank however, when he heard the river lad drive away to the stables. His conscience pricked and worried him because of the happenings of the night.

When he tried to persuade himself that the death of the foreman was purely accidental, he found the lie choking him deeply. But for that sudden, angry push, Gragdon would now be alive instead of dead at the bottom of Roaring Run.

"Come!"

The voice of the stern Mr. Villaindon broke in upon his musings. The next moment he found himself led away toward one of the smaller buildings of the group composing the Hardridge Camp.

Ralph found himself thrust into a small, log-ribbed room, the door closed and locked upon him.

"I will talk with you in the morning," was the parting words of the big man of the camp. Some stools and a bare floor, but no bed or couch of any sort was in the place.

Ralph leaned, choking with grief, yet dry-eyed, against the wall.

In this hour of his extremity the poor lad thought of that dear mother whom he had scarcely known, and of whose fate he knew nothing. He had no harsh feeling toward Mr. Villaindon, since all that he had asserted of him was quite true. At least he should not want for a roof to cover him—the State prison was strong and well kept he had been told.

The air, despite the season, was chilly and the boy suffered not a little from this source during the long hours of the night.

His breakfast was brought him by the timber owner, who expressed sympathy when he noticed the sad, woe-begone countenance of the boy prisoner.

"I have no real power to hold you a prisoner, Ralph," spoke the great man of the pines, "without communicating with the authorities. I suppose you would much rather be in a common jail than where you are at present."

"Oh, sir, must I go to jail?"

"I will leave that for you to decide," returned Mr. Villaindon.

"If that is the case I can decide at once."

"Well?"

"I did not mean to harm the foreman; I was frightened I hardly knew what I was doing," said Ralph, in eager explanation.

"Very likely," admitted the timber owner, "but it is hardly to be supposed that the law will be influenced by how you felt. The least you can expect is ten years in prison."

"Oh, sir, do you think I meant to murder Mr. Gragdon?"

"I cannot say as to that; I am not your judge. It seems to be a fact that my foreman is dead. If he met his death at your hands, I don't see how you can escape punishment."

Ralph Overton covered his face with his hands and groaned aloud.

"Don't take it so much to heart, my boy," softly uttered Villaindon.

"But—but if I go to prison what is to become of mother—of—of—"

"Mother?"

The word came in a sharp, rasping cry from the man's lips.

"What do you know of her? Is she hereabouts? If she is you ought to have thought of her before you entered upon

a course of crime. I am sorry for you, my boy, very sorry indeed. If I could help you I would. Tell me what about your mother."

The voice of the speaker was soft and low, something of commiseration in every syllable he uttered.

"I can tell you nothing, since I know nothing," quickly returned the boy. "I know she was a good woman though, and I have always tried to honor her memory by doing good—the best I knew how."

"Were you doing the best you knew how when you pushed my foreman over the brink of Roaring Run?"

"Oh, sir, have I not explained that? I was not—"

"You wish to keep out of the clutches of the law do you not, my boy?"

"Yes. That is, if I can honorably do so."

"I believe you can if you will listen to me, Ralph."

"Yes, Mr. Villaindon, I will listen."

The timber owner gazed furtively about, then bent nearer to his prisoner, his face flushing with something like shame over what he was meditating.

CHAPTER V.

DEFIANCE AND ESCAPE.

"You are in possession of a cross known as that of St. Glebe," said the great man in a low voice.

"I never told any one but Peg—"

"Of course you didn't," interrupted the man. "I know all about that and care nothing about it; but the cross; simply show it to me, my boy."

"How did you know I had it?" asked Ralph. "Did he tell you—the foreman? He asked for it as you are doing and I never told him I had it. I don't understand."

"I suppose not; it is not necessary that you should, my lad. Let me see the cross will you?"

"Maybe I might if I had it," answered Ralph.

"Yes, I know," assented the man. "You have hidden it, but—"

"No, not hidden, but lost it."

"Lost it, lost the Cross of St. Glebe!"

A great, angry cry broke from the lips of the rich man. His features worked, a red light burning in his eyes.

Ralph was very much puzzled at the great man's excitement. Gragdon had demanded of him this wonderful cross, which, heretofore the boy had thought was only a bit of bric-a-bric fit to remember a sainted mother. Why these men, strangers to him till very recently, should know of and care for the cross was a source of wonderment to the boy.

"It is true," said Ralph. "I lost the cross."

"How, when, where did you lose it?" demanded the rich man.

"I don't know how, when or where, Mr. Villaindon. I only know that I missed the cross one day, and it gave me a great shock. You see, it once belonged to my mother, and I thought by keeping it I might be led to find her if living, or find all about her if she were dead. You don't know how I long to know something about that mother, sir."

"I think I do," said the rich man, in a hard tone of voice. "A boy who is willing to steal, lie and do murder, must naturally think a whole lot of his mother."

With that the timber owner rose to his feet and went out.

The harsh words of the man cut like a knife. They did not have the effect desired and expected by the heartless king of timberland. Our hero, weak and homeless though he was, had spirit and determination. He was roused to action by the too plainly revealed villainy of the man he had thought his friend.

Five minutes later the boy had tried both door and window in an effort to escape from his prison room. The door and window were both securely fastened.

While meditating on what he ought to do the door opened and Mr. Villaindon looked in.

"How are you coming on, Ralph?" he asked with a grim smile.

"All right, sir," answered the boy.

"Not so bad as a county jail, eh?"

"I know nothing about county jails, sir," said Ralph, who had changed his tactics, having resolved to defy the rich man.

"You will soon learn all about one," declared Villaindon. "I have sent my driver to notify the county sheriff that I have apprehended a young murderer. He is certain to arrive before noon and take you away."

Ralph remained silent. He had been schooling himself to meet the worst. Although his conscience smote him for that one act in pushing the foreman over the brink of Roaring Run, he felt in his heart that the bad fellow deserved his fate.

"How do you feel about going to prison for life, boy?" questioned the rich man when he found that his prisoner was uncommunicative.

"I don't expect to go to prison, sir," defiantly uttered Ralph.

Our hero remembered the advice of Peg Tugwell and he meant to follow it.

"I think you will learn to the contrary," growled the other. "You are old enough to be punished for wilful murder. I can see no chance for you to escape."

"I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Villaindon," cried the boy. "What is that, young man?"

"It is that you are old enough to know better than to make a prisoner of me as you have done without a warrant. I have friends who will make you suffer for that."

The speaker held his head high and looked almost a man, garbed as he still was in the garments of the fat boy of Grass Flats.

Villaindon winced. He was plainly surprised at this unexpected turn in the demeanor of his once cringing prisoner.

"Don't be foolish," he admonished Ralph. "The disgrace of even going to prison ought to worry you."

"It might if I felt guilty of wrong doing."

"Gracious!" exclaimed the rich man. "You must be hardened indeed. The dead man in the waters of Roaring Run ought to cut one's conscience if anything could. I am afraid you are utterly incorrigible, and I am sorry to see it. I certainly desired to give you a chance in the world. Low birth is truly a conspiracy against the uplift of man or boy."

"Sir!" flashed our hero, his cheek reddening, "that is a reflection on my mother. I won't stand that."

"I don't see how you can help yourself."

The sneer on the face of the rich man angered his listener to the limit.

"If I was only a man I'd thrash you for that—"

"Tut-tut, don't act foolish, Ralph. I want to be your friend if you will let me."

"Go ahead and show me friendliness then."

The big man walked to the window and looked out.

"My driver hasn't gone yet," he said. "If you will tell me where you have hidden that cross I will not press this charge of murder. We will let it go as an accident, which I am quite convinced it really was. What do you say?"

"I have told you the truth. I don't know where the cross is, sir."

"When did you lose it?"

"That I do not know, sir."

"When did you first miss it?"

"Yesterday after I came to myself at the home of the Tugwells."

"Indeed!"

A sudden light flooded the face of the rich man. It was easy to see that he thought Peg might know something of the whereabouts of the missing cross.

"I spoke to them about the cross, and we all looked for it."

"I see," said Villaindon. "I know something of those Tugwells—a low set. We shall doubtless be able to locate your property at their house."

"I don't believe Peg would take it," broke in Ralph, ready to defend his friends of the Flat house. "They were good to me; and Peg saved my life."

"The more fool he!" muttered the rich man under his breath.

"What is that, sir?"

"Nothing," uttered Villaindon hurriedly. "I was remarking on the misfortune that led to the loss of so valuable a trinket."

"Why do you think it was so valuable, Mr. Villaindon?"

The questioning eyes of the boy were fixed full upon the rich man.

"Because—because—well, such old bits of jewelry are always more or less valuable," half stammered the timber owner. "We must see to finding it at once."

"Nothing would suit me better," declared the boy.

"And you will aid me all you can in this?"

"Nobody wants to find the cross worse than I do sir. I don't know why you should care anything about it, though. It was not yours."

"It will be if we find it—that is, I am willing to buy it of you, my son. A mere trinket like that would not be worth much of course, and yet—"

"No amount of money would induce me to part with it," said Ralph. "I told you it was a relic more valuable to me than its weight in gold. What can you want of it is a puzzle to me."

The timber owner turned away from the window. Ralph saw his chance and made a dash for the door, which was ajar. He flung this open and darted outside. Villaindon was out and after him like a flash.

Ralph dodged this way and that, fleeing for his life.

"Stop the thief!" yelled Villaindon as two men broke into view directly in front of the fleeing boy.

One of the men grasped Ralph by the arm.

"Hold him fast!" called the timber owner. "He is wanted for stealing!"

"Let go! Let go!" yelled the lad, struggling furiously.

The boy's captor grinned and clung all the more tightly. Ralph was desperate. He did not mean to go back to the shanty jail if it were possible to avoid it. Burying his sharp teeth in the hand of his captor the lad found thus a way of releasing himself. The man dropped his clutch, whirling about, yelling with pain.

Ralph thrust his lowered head against the stomach of the second man, doubling him up like a jack-knife. And then the boy ran on unimpeded into the forest. Whatever pursuit was manifest lost itself within a short time, and our hero found himself alone in the depths of the

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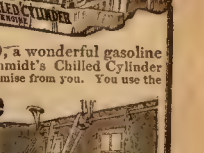

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cedar woods. He panted visibly as he leaned against a tree and thought over the occurrences of the day.

The past four and twenty hours had been indeed eventful ones.

The whole trend of his life seemed changed. He had made both friends and enemies during that brief time.

Could the big man of Hardridge Camp send him to prison? This was the all-important question. It bothered the orphan lad very much. Of course he was guilty of sending the camp foreman to his death, yet, it seemed to the boy, as he leaned lonesomely against that tree in the woods, that it had been really in defense of his own life that he had acted.

He wanted to see some one to talk with, some one who would at least not go against him even though he could not sympathize fully with his hopes and aspirations. There was only one person who would fill this bill—Peg Tugwell.

Assured that he was no longer pursued, our hero walked forward through the low-hanging greenwood, moneyless, yet hopeful.

Little did the boy dream of the many adventures he was to meet and the difficulties he must overcome ere he was to find rest and happiness with home and friends.

CHAPTER VI.

STORM TURNS THE TABLE.

Ralph remained several hours in the woods ere he ventured to make his way to civilization. He tramped down past Roaring Run, reached the Grass Flats and hurried his steps in the direction of the Tugwell cottage.

A clump of low-headed trees grew between the Run and the house on the Flats. Our hero was entering this group of timber when he came face to face with a span of horses and a buggy driven by a thick-set man, wearing a slouch hat.

"Hello!" and the man drew rein.

"Good morning, sir," answered the boy.

Man and buggy halted beside Ralph. A pair of keen eyes gleamed from under the slouch hat.

"You are Ralph Overton," spoke the man.

"Yes, sir, that is my name."

"Take a seat with me, I wish to talk with you."

"But you are not going my way," said Ralph.

"Where are you going?"

"Down to Bay Haven, like enough."

"All right; get in, I'll take you there," and the man wheeled his span of sleek bays quickly about. Ralph got in, hardly thinking what the result might be. It seemed a little strange that the man should turn about and go back to town simply to accommodate him.

Men were not given to doing such kindnesses where he was concerned. Ralph was comfortably seated, riding toward the city, before he was aware of what had been done.

The cozy buggy seat was very comfortable and our hero breathed with a relieved feeling. The man was chatty and pleasant spoken.

"You are not much acquainted about here, eh?" queried the man.

"No," admitted Ralph. "I have worked a few weeks in the woods; earned a little money only to be sent adrift without my pay."

"Ah, how is that?"

"The camp foreman got mad at me for something that happened of which I wasn't guilty, and he turned me out without a penny."

"That wasn't right."

"I needed the money too. It's pretty tough to go about the country without a cent in your pocket."

"Sure it is my boy. Who is this man who turned you out without paying what was owing to you? A low vagabond I am sure?"

"You may know him—"

Ralph ceased suddenly. The thought came to him in a flash that the foreman had paid for his ill treatment of him with his life.

"What's his name?"

"Why—it is, or was, Gilbert Gragdon."

"Was, eh? You speak in the past tense. Is the man dead?"

A pair of the keenest eyes ever set in a man's head read the boy to the very soul. Ralph winced and turned his face away.

"I am afraid he is," said the boy, schooling his feelings with an effort.

"Well, in that case, you get your revenge," and the man chuckled.

"I didn't want revenge, sir—"

"Didn't, eh? Why not? The fellow treated you like a dog didn't he?"

"I don't look at it that way," quickly returned the boy, something like remorse smiting him. "The poor man met with an accident—"

"Let's hear about it."

Our hero hesitated. The man took up the lagging confab with: "Retribution came to him sooner than he had reason to expect. I ain't blaming you so much for tumbling the fellow into the gulch."

Something like a laugh oozed from the stomach of the thick-set man. Ralph realized that he had gone too far. The man had shrewdly guessed his secret and the boy was on nettles to get rid of his company.

"Stop a moment, please," suddenly spoke our hero, laying his hand on his companion's sleeve; "I will get out here."

"Oh, no, I guess you won't," chuckled the other. "You are booked for Bay Haven all right enough—"

Ralph was up at this, making ready for a spring.

He was jerked back to the seat and a cold pair of circles snapped over his wrists, at which a low, mocking laugh dropped from the man's lips.

"What is this for—a joke?" gasped our hero, holding up his manacled hands.

"Yes, a joke," agreed the other. "It was you I was after all the time, Master Ralph Overton. It was really kind of you to drop into my hands as you did. Saved me a lot of trouble. Got a telephone message from the boss at Hardridge Camp asking me to come up and take charge of a young reprobate who had murdered his foreman. Easy done wasn't it, boy?"

But Ralph was too thunderstruck to speak.

He leaned down with his face between his knees and burst into tears.

"Well, well, now, boy, don't cry," cheered the officer. "Of course I must do my duty as sheriff of this county, but, blame me if I believe the old man will be able to make this charge stick. It was an accident, no doubt, as you say, and you will be able to prove it."

At this the boy cried the harder.

The young reader must not think harshly of the hero of this story because he has not seemed a veritable David in his fight for the right. He was simply an ordinary American boy, who, having been buffeted about, homeless and friendless since childhood, was not quite of such stuff as heroes are made—fiction heroes at any rate.

"Well, now, I'm blest if I ain't sorry for you, my boy. I'll see that you have a fair show and a square deal, anyhow."

Ralph lifted his head at the sound of distant rumbling.

"What was that?"

"Thunder, by gracious!" exclaimed the sheriff, speaking a sharp word to his animals. Forward the beasts plunged into the deeper recesses of the woods.

A distant, rumbling roar swept up from the southwest.

The trees bent their tasseled heads in stony silence. Not a breath of air stirred the dead foliage, dead from very dearth of movement indicating life.

The roaring increased.

"Doesn't sound much like thunder," said Ralph, brushing aside his tears with the cloth of his sleeves which partly hid the glittering bracelets.

"No, it's wind," in a hushed voice.

"My, how dark it is growing!"

"Mercy! a tornado!" uttered the sheriff in a sepulchral voice.

And he was right. Vivid flashes of lightning scuttled across the black sky. The trees moaned in silent agony, like living beings about to meet some deadly, terrible shock.

Ralph felt the awe inspired by the scene. He glanced up into the face of his companion, noting a white fear riveted there. Ralph rattled his handcuffs; the sound attracted no attention from the sheriff. He had all he could do to manage the horses, who were dancing and plunging in an agony of fright.

"Ah!" screamed our hero, "there she comes!"

A fiendish crash of the elements shook the firmament. Trees were twisted as dry reeds and dashed in splintered heaps to the ground. Darkness as of midnight covered the scene.

One of the worst storms in years swept for a brief period across the valley of Roaring Run. It was such a storm which has its greatest vogue in the tropics—a tornado as destructive as rare to the temperate zone.

When it was over and the sun peered out from behind swift-scudding clouds, a boy, wet and bedraggled, drew himself from a heap of fallen timber, crawled out from under splintered tree-trunks, into an open space steaming with the moisture and heat of this almost tropical storm.

Ralph was more frightened than hurt. There was a scratch across his cheek, a purple dot at the edge of his wet and bedraggled chestnut hair.

The brightness of a summer's day succeeded the wild storm. A distant rumble of thunder echoed from the far distance, the last faint growl of the wind-beast which had raved so savagely but a brief ten minutes before.

Our hero crawled into the fuller light of the opening among the trees and sat blinking and gazing in troubled silence about him.

"What has happened?" gasped the boy.

And then he remembered. His gaze rested an instant on his manacled wrists—these told the story which brought a groan from boyish lips.

Where were the sheriff and horses? Not a sign of them was visible. Instead great heaps of fallen timber loomed up on every hand. In fact he seemed completely hemmed in.

Not being badly hurt our young hero rose to his feet and moved as if to escape from the surrounding windfall.

The task was not an easy one since the boy was not as strong as the more rugged lads of his age.

A groan attracted the boy. This came from the left, where there was a narrow opening leading toward the river. Ralph, anxious for the safety of the sheriff, hurried in the direction of the sound. In a little hollow, with a fragment of pine tree fully across his chest, lay the sheriff. His face was smeared with blood; he looked like one dead, yet the boy could see that he breathed, although very faintly.

"Oh, oh!" gasped the man, blood flecking his lips.

"I'll do what I can to help you," called Ralph, bending down, striving to lift the log. Handicapped by the handcuffs the lad's efforts were fruitless.

"If it wasn't for these rings of steel I could do something," said the agitated boy, gazing anxiously about in a vain search for help.

"The handcuffs?—curse them! I—I put them on—" and then the man of the law fainted dead away.

Yes, he had put them on, and now to his own hurt. "Poor man," thought the handcuffed boy. "I can't let him die without doing something to help him."

At this Ralph espied a broken pine limb of considerable size not far away. Dragging this to the hollow, Ralph inserted the larger end under the pinned log.

CHAPTER VII.

RALPH AND JILL.

To his joy our hero found the heavy log move when he threw his full weight on the pry he had inserted beneath it.

It was now a puzzle to fasten the log. Ralph needed help badly. He raised his voice in a shout and was glad to hear an answering cry.

Soon after a boy climbed through the mass of piled-up treetops and stood blinking before the boy waif—Peg of Grass Flats. The round face of the newcomer shone like a glass bottle.

"Hello! You ain't killed after all."

Without more words the fat boy fell to and soon, with Ralph's assistance, had the broken tree rolled from the bleeding form of the sheriff.

"By hokus, but that was a hot windstorm, eh, Ralph?"

The speaker wiped the sweat from his steaming red face as he spoke.

Ralph admitted that it was.

"And the sheriff had you, eh?"

Our boy hero nodded, holding up his pinioned arms.

"Well, by hokus, what is it for, Ralph? What have you done?"

Overton explained in a few words. Patty laughed at the end. It was no laughing matter, and so Ralph expressed himself.

"Quite true," agreed the fat youth, "nor is it a matter if you laugh. They can't do a thing to you, pard, not a thing."

"I hope you are right, but these bracelets are uncomfortable."

The sheriff, at this point, stirred and groaned. They went at once to the man's assistance, dragging him out of the hollow onto a grassy knoll. He seemed very badly injured. Despite this fact the fat lad went through his pockets, producing a bunch of keys, one of which fitted the lock of the handcuffs.

Once free Ralph breathed a great sigh of relief.

"Is there any way out of this, Peg?" he asked.

"Sure," echoed the fat boy. "It's not so bad if one keeps close to the bank of the Run. Wasn't many trees there you see, and the path is almost clean. Are you strong enough to help carry Mr. Waldon to the road?"

"I think so."

The two boys lifted the wounded sheriff, and despite his groans, bore him through and around the masses of fallen timber to the side of the road where they deposited him in as easy a position as possible.

The whinny of a horse caused the boys to look about. Not far away they discovered one of the sheriff's animals, hemmed in by debris, yet quite unhurt. His mate was not far away, dead from the fall of dry limbs.

It was with considerable difficulty that they got the unharmed horse from out the tangle of fallen treetops. Once in the road the boys prepared a brush drag on which they deposited the wounded man.

Attaching the animal to the drag by means of a toggled up harness, they set out, down the road in the direction of the Tugwell cottage.

While on the way the fat boy related how he had become alarmed for the safety of the man he had seen drive past just before the storm swept down the valley.

"I didn't know it was the sheriff, not

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being very intimate with him. I reckoned you was safe at the shanties. It seems you have a lot of beastly enemies, Ralph."

"Yes, and I am puzzled to know why," returned our hero.

"It must have something to do with your past life. You don't know who and what you are. Old man Villaindon seems mighty anxious to get his strangle hold on that St. Glebe Cross; there's something in or about that which might explain the mystery. We must find it, Ralph."

"I only wish you might."

"Sure we will find it," optimistically pronounced the fat boy.

"If I lost it at the shanty it won't ever come to light," despairingly echoed Ralph.

"Do you imagine you lost it there?"

"I am afraid so."

"In that case the cook may have found it. Anyhow, the old man didn't get his clutches on it, else you'd fared different. And the foreman knew nothing about it. Too bad that scamp got your money away from you. I reckon we'll make old Villy come to time before this trouble ends."

"We? Oh, Peg, don't think I expect to ask you to fall into my scrapes," protested Ralph.

The other laughed and rubbed his bulging cheek.

"Pshaw," said he, "what d'ye take me for, Ralph Overton? I haven't had a bit of fun in a cat's age, which is longer than a dog's. I like you; I don't like old Villy, and I'm going to help you master him or bust a toggle. It's my way, and I won't hear a word from you against it, pard."

The speaker turned a somersault clear over the drag, landing safely on his feet on the other side.

"You are very good—"

"Rats, cats and snakes! I ain't anything of the kind, pard," broke forth Peg with several facial contortions that fetched a laugh to the lips of Ralph. "Me'n Jill is two lonely folks, without any amusement; we've got to have something to do or lose our sanity. I think Jill girl, is a little sort of daffy lately, caused by her lonesome life. Didn't you notice it?"

"No," said Ralph. "I didn't. On the contrary I think your sister a very smart girl."

"Truly now; honest Injun, pard?"

"Honest Injun, Peg."

Our hero smiled at the sudden earnestness displayed by the volatile Mr. Tugwell. He was growing to like the fat youth despite his eccentricities.

They were nearing the house now. Jill came out to meet them, a scared questioning in her big brown eyes.

Given to understand the situation the girl at once prepared a bed for the injured sheriff; the horse was stabled with Peg's sorrel pony, in a shack of pine boughs.

"I'll go down to the corners and telephone for a doctor," said Peg, after everything had been done that could be for the hurt sheriff.

Ralph went out to the road with his fat friend.

Peg led out his French horse, or pony, attached him to a cart and asked Ralph to ride with him to the corners scarce two miles away.

"I hardly know what to do," said the ex-chore-boy. "I suppose that warrant of Sheriff Waldon's holds good, even if the officer is unable to carry it into effect. I half believe it is my duty to go to Bay Haven and surrender myself."

"And I half believe you will be a silly fool if you do anything of the sort, pard," snorted the fat boy.

"But the law is something that a boy can't buck against, Peg."

"Is it, now?"

"It might injure me in the long run if I run away from this warrant."

"Have you seen the warrant?"

"No; but—"

"Did he read it to you?"

"No, but he said he had one."

Fatty's reply came in a jeering laugh.

"I feel as though I ought to give myself up—"

"Well, of course, if you feel that way I've nothing to say."

The fat youth vaulted into the seat and drove away. Halting a few rods down the road he leaned over the back of the seat and called to the boy left standing beside the road:

"Stay here and look after the man and Jill till I return, will you, pard?"

"All right," replied the smaller boy.

Peg drove on while Ralph turned his steps toward the house. He walked thoughtfully to the door and sat down on the step. Here Jill came to him with news that the injured man was breathing easily and seemed to be asleep.

Ralph looked up with a smile.

The girl was really pretty, with a modest grace born of the wild country in which she lived. She was as bright and cheerful as a child.

"Oh, I think he will get well, all right," said the boy.

He thought of that warrant and wondered if it was still on the sheriff's person.

"How long have you lived here, Miss Tugwell?" asked he, making a place at his side into which the girl sank with natural grace and ease.

"Ever since father died, and that was ten years ago. Peg hunts and fishes and does odd jobs for the timbermen. We have never suffered for want of plenty to eat and wear."

"And you are perfectly happy here?"

"Why, yes, why not?" and the girl laughed softly.

To Ralph this seemed a bit strange. For him such a life, in solitude, working by day for the rough timber-jacks, fishing by night, and passing the time without books, pictures and company, held nothing but distaste. Although he had been reared among the most humble surroundings, he yet delighted in the nicer things of life. He aspired to something higher. Then books and school held out to him in imagination a glad hope that his present surroundings could not blacken.

"Why not?" again asked the girl.

"Oh, I don't know," uttered Ralph. "Life here must be awful tiresome."

"Can there be anything better?"

"Can there be?" and the boy laughed grimly. "I really oughtn't to judge. I haven't had many bright spots in my life. You here are certainly a great deal better off than I. And yet—"

"Yes, there is something else?"

"You see it, feel it?" he cried, turning his face up to hers.

"Yes, I feel that there may be something way off yonder, something that a girl could enjoy with a whole lot of girl friends. Oh, yes, I have dreamed such things."

The boy smiled his appreciation. A rattle of wheels announced the approach of a vehicle. Ralph sprang up as a buggy drove up from the east bearing two men.

"Boy, we want you!" cried one of the men, springing to the ground.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this rattling boy's story. They have great times. Read it to the end and see. We will give you constant- that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly the very best stories of entertainment larly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

The Franklin Mystery.

(Continued from page three.)

Realizing that he must say something very laudatory, and not wanting to fall short in her estimation of his ability to make adequate expression of his delight in the sight of so much gorgeous wealth, he burst out extravagantly:

"Dey is more than elegantly, Miss Marble—dey is simply grand!"

It was time for him to withdraw, and make arrangements for the local police to surround the house and hold the rest of the population from attempting to free Frank when Tom should arrest the negro on his return to Sally Marble's rooms. But before leaving he desired to find out whether the woman had been told where the articles orginally came from.

"What does yuh man do, that he can buy yuh sich presents?" he asked.

"Why, he's a Pullman car porter, and gits enough tips to buy anything he wants to give his gal," said Sally.

"Where did he buy dem?" asked Tom.

"Deed, Ah don't know," declared Miss Marble. "Tain't perlite for a sassiety gal like me to ask my man where he gets his engagement ring."

Tom by this time had got up from his chair and moved to the door. In making his departure he wished to say something that would leave Sally in a pleasant frame of mind, and he uttered the first words that came into his head.

"Before Ah goes, Miss Marble, Ah wishes to say how deserving yuh is of dem fine jewels," he declared enthusiastically. "'Deed, yuh is so nice Ah would git 'em for you, if yuh was my gal, even if Ah had to steal 'em."

With this he bade her good-by and went out. Sally, struck by his words, looked after the retreating figure of the detective with a puzzled expression on her face.

She wondered if his words signified anything, for there was a peculiar note in Spark's voice, denoting doubt of her fiance's honesty. It occurred to her that the stranger must have discovered something concerning the jewels which she had not noticed. Then if he supposed they were not obtained by honest means they were more valuable than she imagined and Frank was keeping back from her information that he did not dare disclose.

As she was turning these suppositions over in her mind, and getting ready to say something to Frank on his return, Tom Sparks was not aware that there are times when the most acute manhunter, whose keen wits are his stock in trade in dealing with criminals and trying to circumvent their plans, can fall of his usual circumspection.

This slip was to cause him to lose for a while his prey, now so close to hand as he found out a short time later on.

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The Sea Trailer.

(Continued from page eight.)

left deserted and alone, although only five minutes' walk from their new quarters.

Four days they dug in the sand that filled the interior of the Black Beak, all the while watching from their point of labor for their mysterious companion on the island, but saw nothing of him. The four days, too, were unproductive of other results that were desired. Their delving brought to them nothing save a few inconsequential things, like bits of iron, the keel and other rotting timbers.

"Two days more will clear her," said Barron, "but I question if we are wise to expend our strength. There 's no treasure here."

"Don't be so sure!" exclaimed the sailor. "I smell money, hear bullion, and taste diamonds and rubies. Wait and see what I'll do tomorrow! I'm going to make a record, mate!"

He made one. Ten minutes later he was going up the ridge to secure eggs from the nests of the sea fowl. Engaged thus he slipped, fell, caught by one leg in a crevice, slipped loose and then came to firm ground in a heap. Trying to rise he failed, and Barron's help was necessary to get him to their living place.

No bones were broken, but he had a disastrous sprain. A huge lump rose in his thigh, and the leg was useless, while the pain of moving even a short distance was so great that he did not leave his bed of hay. He knew of a plant he had seen gathered on another island, a hundred miles to the west, and though its presence was problematical, he described it so well that Barron found it there and made the necessary application. It was a good poultice, but the sprain demanded time to heal.

Left alone, Barron found digging monotonous. Eli's urging kept him busy a part of the time, and when not otherwise engaged he roamed over the island in hopes of coming upon the stranger.

Here, as at the wreck, he was disappointed.

The third day of Eli's time as a patient his mate crossed the ridge, still intent upon finding the stranger, and prosecuting his search, went to the extreme north end of Torrento. Arrived there he rounded the extremity and started back along the eastern side. As much as conditions permitted he kept within the depressions, wishing to make himself as little visible as possible; and all the while he scanned the spurs sharply.

His care was lost, and he drew near the carcass of the Black Beak again. Giving up all thought of the mysterious hiders, and wishing to return to Eli, he emerged fully from the valley, and turned the point of a spur his face toward the sea and the beach just before him.

A crowded ship's boat was nearing the shore, and in her bows stood Mark Piper.

Barron stopped, dumfounded, half-dazed and wholly filled with momentary consternation. That party lacked much of being strangers. The burly men, wolfish, scowling and ferocious of aspect, and now distinguished in many cases by bandages that were stained with red, had been in the Sweeping Broom when last he walked her deck. A party of the pirates had come to Torrento.

He saw more. In the stern were the Queen, Mrs. Piper and Miriam, and close to Piper was John Mockrod. He looked in vain for Captain Duke.

Piper was his old self. Round, rosy, and smooth of face as a girl, he carried a beaming smile and was like a refulgent figure-head for the boat. The foremost person of all was eyeing the island compassionately.

"Here we are, good friends," he announced. "Safe come to the promised land, like the Israelites of old. May I, my valued companions, venture to say that I am your Moses—"

His speech was checked. Barron had been given but a moment for thought, the brief flow of remarks having followed immediately upon the discovery, and when the Virginian would have moved back into hiding he found himself under Piper's observation.

"And here," that man added, "is an old friend, an Israelite without guile, a forerunner to spy out our path. Mr. Barron, we all greet you!"

He did not raise his voice but slightly, and the words came distinctly to the single man, who found himself in a quandry. Fortunately for him the question of whether this urbane individual was Seagulf did not then press upon him, but, rather, his personal safety and the welfare of Miriam were the dominating thoughts in his mind.

Having been seen he determined quickly upon a bold course. He carried a loaded pistol and a knife, and he stepped forward to meet the party. No other boat was visible, and he realized that misfortune had come to the freebooters.

Hardly more than a score of men were in the boat, and some of these seemed more fit for hospitals than war.

The greetings of Piper and Piper sprang out. His smile did not waver, but, though he had more to say, he made no effort to cross hands in pretended friendship with Barron.

"My dear sir," he continued, "what appeared to be your calamity in falling overboard was really your gain. The Sweeping Broom had the fortune to encounter a warship, and in the desperate fight she was nearly shot to pieces and Captain Duke killed by a musket ball. We seized upon the falling night and drew away, escaping thus, but the ship was wounded so sorely that she sank, two days later, in spite of our efforts to save her. The survivors took this boat when she settled. I happened to know of this island, so I suggested to Lieutenant Mockrod that we lay our course for it and here we are."

By this time men and women were coming ashore, and Barron was encouraged to see that all of the latter moved freely, as if uninjured. Within the boat a head was briefly lifted and dull eyes looked out of a pallid face that was surely Zorr Royel's, but the head quickly dropped. He seemed to be badly wounded.

"An interesting bit of land," Piper pursued. "Abundant vegetation, fruit trees, high, dry surface—ah! what have we here? A vessel, but hopelessly wrecked. It will be useful, though only for shelter. Also, I will advise—your pardon, Lieutenant Mockrod; I forgot myself. With our arrival my conduct of affairs ends. You are chief officer here."

His words flowed smoothly, but no responsive smile crossed Mockrod's face. Perhaps he believed that a subordinate should have less to say, even if his speech was unctious. A short nod was his only reply.

Words were not pressed upon Barron, and he was scanning certain of the party narrowly. He saw that Captain Duke's widow was pale and haggard, like one who had met with harsh misfortune and bore it poorly; he noted that Mrs. Piper was her usual phlegmatic self, and that mixed emotions were evidently in Miriam Lee's mind.

It was a surprise when she came quickly to his side.

"Thank Heaven you are safe!" he exclaimed.

"I was about to say as much to you," she replied hastily. "I have feared for you, and wondered if I did well to urge you away."

"You saved my life."

"Then, perhaps, but how now? We are both among wild beasts, and I am in terror. It has been said that this island is uninhabited. What are we to do with human fiends as our only companions? Oh! Mr. Barron, what are we to do?"

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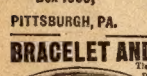

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Dazzling Schemes

(Continued from page five.)

find out the frame-up of things if possible."

Bobby reflected for a moment.

"Sandy," he said at length, "when there was war brewing at the place I volunteered to go with you, and now that you go on a peaceful errand—you do not even consider it worth while to invite me."

Sandy laughed happily.

"Don't say another word," he implored. "We'll go to Dragon Castle together."

This extremely interesting story will be continued in next week's Ledger, presenting the readers with some very dramatic happenings. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger, you are strongly urged to send in your subscription at once. Every family should take the Ledger, as humor and stories and pictures make life brighter and pleasanter for all, bringing health and entertainment and doing every one good. Be wise and attend to this today.

Ben Sheldon's Love

(Continued from page thirteen.)

made by the wagon-trains before civilization made "the wilderness to blossom like a rose."

Many people traveling through this country admire the mountain scenery viewed from a distance, but none have dreamed of the cavern in the mountainside, closed now, probably, for all time by the great boulder, for there is none living who knows the secret of its opening. And not to our knowledge is there any one now who ever heard of what was then known as the hermit's cave. All is swallowed up in the past, when wild savage tribes roamed the forest and prairies and terrorized settlers as well as emigrants.

And with all the rest is obscured the name of Ben Sheldon, who was in those days a "Scout of the Plains!"

The end.

HARD TO PLEASE.

"Do you want a job, young man?" inquired the honest old horny handed, toil-worn farmer.

"Well, yes. I'm open to an engagement if you make your offer sufficiently attractive," replied the man who was holding up the side of a building.

"I'm prepared to be generous," the honest old farmer assured him. "I simply must have a man right away, and so I won't haggle about wages."

"I don't care so much about the matter of wages," remarked the young man. "Of course, I expect reasonable pay, but what I'm after is the comforts of a home. Just guarantee me that and show me that your guaranty is good and we won't quarrel about the wages. I hired out with a farmer down in Coles Conty last fall at corn shucking time, and he promised me the comforts of a home and said his wife would take a motherly interest in me and I'd be just like a big brother to his girls. Nothing could be more alluring than the picture he drew of the happy home life I was going to enjoy.

"Well, sir, I was young and credulous then. The stern school of experience hadn't yet taught me that promises are gold bricks. I actually believed that man and my bosom was aglow with hope when I went to his place to work. As soon as I got inside the house his wife, told me she was going to be a mother to me. I tell you right here that I'll never allow another woman to be a mother to me, and if you expect me to be a big brother to your little girls you are going to lose out. When a man's stung once he learns a few things. That woman just kept me bumping all the time whenever I was round the house. It broke her heart if she saw me sitting down resting for a minute. Her idea of being a mother to me was to keep me loping around doing her work for her.

"After I'd been out in the field all day, shucking corn until I was a total loss, that woman would have me clean out the cellar or carry in enough wood to run the stove for three weeks or do a stunt at the churn or something. Then on Sundays I was expected to do the big brother act and herd those children out on the range and see that they weren't swallowed by bullsnakes. I'm an easy mark, I know, but I can't be lined up in the big brother department a second time.

"Then they gave me the worst of everything on the place. I had a room about the size of a sardine box away up in the garret. It was so small that I couldn't get into it if I had my coat on. The bed was down at one corner and the window sash was always falling in and hitting me on the head when I was asleep. There was a hole in the roof right over my bed and all the rain in Illinois poured through that hole, and I used to go down stairs in the morning looking as though somebody ought to hang me on the line to dry. Talk about the comforts of a home! If you are dishing out the same sort of comforts to your hired men I wouldn't go to work for you for $1,000 a month."

"You'll be treated just like a member of the family if you work for me," said the honest old tiller and toiler.

"That's what that Coles County pirate said to me," remarked the young man, gloomily. "I thought he was going to embrace me when he talked about making me a member of his family. You never saw a man so full of the milk of human kindness. He was just brimming over with good will and affection. And then when he got me on his ranch the old fraud worked me like a government mule, and when he had me as limp as a rag he turned me over to his wife and she mothered me until my heart broke in three places, and then when there was nothing else doing I was featured as a big brother.

"I don't believe I want to work for you. "You're entirely too agreeable and polite and you seem too anxious to lavish the wealth of your affections on me. I expect that if I went to your place I'd have to sleep on a perpendicular bed and scrap with the dog for my share of the spareribs. So I guess I'll pass up the lucrative situation you offer me."

Knew the Law.

If women ever come to sit on the bench in old Virginia, there's a maiden lady living on her ancestral acres just across the Potomac from Washington who can qualify for the job.

Recently a reality company bought a tract of land the other side of her property and platted it into suburban lots. Desiring ready access to the capital, they instituted proceedings to run a public road through the old lady's land; worse, as she learned, the projected road would cut right through the prettiest part of her trim lawn, dear with its memories of her childhood.

She consulted a lawyer, only to be told there was no help for it, since private property may, under the law, be condemned for public use, no matter how unwilling an indignant owner may be.

Far from resigning herself to the ruthless inroad on her cherished lawn, the old lady buried herself in the musty law library handed down from an ancient ancestor, once a prominent judge in the old dominion.

When some days later a party of surveyors appeared with stakes and chains to lay out the line of road they found the owner, spade in hand, just setting out the last of a phalanx of young apple trees squarely in front of the lawn and right in the line of the proposed highway.

"If you set foot inside this orchard," she said defiantly to the astonished surveyors, "I'll have you all thrown out and then arrested for trespass." With that she called up half a dozen lusty young countrymen waiting behind the barn for the summons.

"What does all this mean?" asked the leader of the surveying party, in whose contract there had been no mention of fighting. "We are surveying for a public road and can go anywhere."

"Anywhere—except through an orchard!" excl aimed the old lady, pulling a musty volume from under her apron. "It's been the law in Virginia since the days of Patrick Henry that you can't run even a public road through an orchard, so you stay out!"

The old lady dug up an ancient law unknown to modern attorneys, confounded her opponents and saved her lawn.

Comforting the Old Man.

Mother (in a very low voice)—Tommy, your grandfather is very sick. Can't you say something to cheer him up a bit?

Tommy (in an earnest voice)—Grandfather, wouldn't you like to have soldiers at your funeral?

A MEAN MULE.

"You are charged," said the judge, "with cruelty to animals. The policeman who arrested you says that he never saw such inhuman conduct as yours. It seems that you tore a board off a fence and belabored your unfortunate mule with it until you were too exhausted to continue the outrageous performance. It doesn't seem possible for you to explain away such testimony."

"Yes, it is possible," said the prisoner, cheerfully. "I could fill this courtroom with witnesses who would convince your honor that my conduct was perfectly natural and proper, and that the mule was only getting what was coming to it. That's the most annoying mule in the United States, judge, and all my neighbors know it, and they're always wondering why I don't feed him a stick of dynamite or curry him with an ax. It's all very well for a policeman to come along and see me rebuking that animal and then jump at conclusions, but that policeman never had to wrestle with such a mule.

"I was coming to town this morning with a spring wagon loaded with vegetables and real eggs and other produce. I got as far as the railway track. There was a train coming about a quarter of a mile away, and I thought I had oceans of time to get across. Well, that mule crossed the track, and then stopped short, with the wagon right on the rails, and deliberately waited for the train to come and smash things.

"I did everything a man could do to get him started, but you might as well argue with a rhinoceros as to try to do anything with that mule. He just stood there, all braced for the shock, and the locomotive caught that wagon amidships, and the way my cabbage and butter and eggs soared around the neighborhood was a sin. I'll bet that people half a mile away from there were shoveling scrambled eggs off their roofs all morning.

"Is it any wonder that I took a board and chided him with it? If that had been his first offense I might consider myself in the wrong, but he's always acting ornery like that. He'll go along for weeks and months together, as moral and law-abiding as any mule in the United States, waiting for a chance to make a killing. He never fritters away his energies on small meannesses. He doesn't kick or bite, like ordinary mean mules. He just bides his time till he can cause a regular blamed cataclysm and then he lets go all holds and knocks things upside down.

"Last fall my sister was visiting me. She's quite a corpulent lady, weighing about 300, but she's spry and takes lots of exercise, hoping to keep her weight down. Well, she saw me whanging around the place with that old mule and took it for granted that the beast was as safe as a wooden horse. So one day when I was away from home, my sister Agnes dug up an old sidesaddle and strapped it on that mule and climbed aboard, expecting to amble quietly along and enjoy the scenery and fresh air.

"Well, a session like that was nuts to that mule. He hadn't had such an opportunity in years. He frolicked around the yards, brushing up against every building and finally ran under a wire clothes line and the line caught my sister under her chin and hoisted her clear out of the saddle and when she hit the ground a lot of crockery fell off the shelves in the pantry of my house, a hundred yards away.

"She's a most determined woman, is Agnes, and she won't admit that she's whipped while she can stand, so she rounded up old Ebenezer again and got on his back and he started full tilt for the hog lot fence as though he was going through it, but when he got within six feet of it he stopped suddenly. Agnes went right ahead, however, and landed in a hog wallow about four feet deep, and we had to take her down to the creek to get her cleaned up. I could tell you of a dozen such incidents, judge——"

"You don't need to," interrupted the judge. "You are discharged. I owned a mule myself, once."

Soot Potato Aid.

One of the smokiest places on earth is undoubtedly Achill, off the coast of Mayo, Ireland. A smoky atmosphere is not an unknown thing in any Irish cabin, but in Achill the greater the smoke the higher the satisfaction of the natives, for there smoke means potatoes, and potatoes mean food.

It is to one of the methods of procuring soot that the islander owes the smoky condition of his cabin. Soot he must have, or the potatoes will not grow. In the tilled fields he erects little huts called "scrawhogues," formed by "scraws," or sods of heather from the mountains. Within these huts he keeps a fire burning for six weeks or two months, at the end of which period the scraws are, from their continual impregnation with smoke, transformed into soot.

Turf or peat is abundant on the island and the large fires cost nothing.

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7112—Boy's Russian Blouse, 2, 4 and 6 years. For a boy of 4 years of age will be required 1¼ yards of material 27 inches wide, 3 yards 36 or or 2⅜ yards 44, with 10 yards of braid to trim as shown in the large view, ⅞ yards of contrasting material 27 inches wide to trim as shown in the small view.

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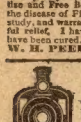

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

Jimmy Rabbit.

Jimmy Rabbit had a brand-new suit. It was red, with gold buttons and white sailor collar—a truly beautiful garment. His mother had made it for him, and when he put it on the first time she was even more proud of it than he was and that is saying a good deal, for Jimmy was so proud that he kept running to the mirror to admire it every five minutes and he almost forgot to start for school. They got him off at last, and his mother and sister Susie stood at the window to wave him goodby and Jimmy hopped and skipped and danced along the way, swinging his school books at the end of his strap and singing as he went.

The road to school led through a dark wood, which was the home of a great eagle, but as it was broad daylight Jimmy was not afraid and kept on hopping and skipping and swinging his school books, but just as he came near the tree where the eagle's nest was he gave such a particular violent hop and skip and swung his school books with so much energy that they broke from his grasp and went flying up into the air, up and up until they landed in the eagle's nest.

Jimmy was much dismayed when he saw what had happened to his schoolbooks. As he knew it was no use going to school without them he set about climbing the tree to get them back. He climbed carefully so that he should not burst his new suit, and it was rather slow progress, but at last he reached the edge of the nest and looked over. There were the books all safe and sound, but underneath them, crushed to a shapeless mass, was the eagle's favorite egg.

Now, of course, Jimmy did not know that it was the eagle's favorite egg, and so he was not so sorry, and he was just about to pick up his books and climb down the tree again when he heard a tremendous flutter shrieking "Oh, you naughty, naughty Jimmy Rabbit! You've broken my favorite egg." Before Jimmy had time to apologize politely, the eagle swooped down from the treetop and, seizing him in one claw and the schoolbooks in the other, it mounted again into the air and flew away over the forest.

Jimmy was so frightened that the brass buttons on his new suit rattled with his shiverings.

At last the eagle swooped down from the heights and put down Jimmy and the schoolbooks on a tiny island in the midst of the boundless seas. "There, now," it said crossly. "I've put you in a place where you won't smash my eggs again!"

Jimmy was much distressed when he found where he was, for he did not know how he would ever be able to get back again, and he feared that if he ever did manage to get off he would be late for school, a thing that had not happened to him for a whole year. So he approached the eagle, who was resting on a rock before setting out on the homeward flight, and endeavored to soften its heart, but the agle would not soften a bit and only replied, "Go away and don't bother me!" to everything that Jimmy said, till Jimmy was in despair.

At last he cried; "Oh, eagle, if you'll take me home again I'll give you six of my new brass buttons."

"What do I want with brass buttons?" asked the eagle.

"Why," explained Jimmy, "you can string them on my schoolbook strap—I'll give you that, too—and wear them as a necklace!"

At this the eagle opened first one eye and then the other (it had kept them obstinately closed up to this time) and said, "Oh, all right. Hop on my back," and in a second Jimmy found himself again sailing through the air. The eagle was now in an amiable frame of mind, and at Jimmy's request carried him directly to the school door just as the bell was ringing. Then Jimmy gave him the buttons and the schoolbook strap, and the eagle flew away with them well pleased.

When Jimmy came home that afternoon his mother was much astonished at the disappearance of six of his buttons. At first she thought it careless of him to lose six in one day, but when he explained that he had given them to the eagle she felt better about it and sewed on six new ones for him, but she told him in the future to be careful about swinging his books, for eagles were not always good tempered, and if he were to break the eagle's eggs again the bird might not be appeased even with new brass buttons.

Little Willie Doubleupp—Do you have to dress us twins exactly alike?
His Mamma—I intend to do so.
Little Willie—Then I'm glad one of us isn't a girl.

Tot Wit.

Little Hostess (at bedtime)—Why don't you take your stockings off, too.

Little Guest (whose mother buys the cheap black kind)—I've got all of 'em off that will come off.

"And now," said the teacher of the juvenile Sunday school class, "why did God create this beautiful world?"

"I don't know," replied a bright little fellow, "unless there was no one else who could do it."

David had accompanied his mother to church and he noticed she dropped a penny into the contribution plate. On the way home his mother found fault with the sermon.

"Well, mamma," said the little fellow, "what could you expect for a cent?"

Mother's Pies.

A boy in New York city fought a little fight with a girl who had said that his mother's pies were not good to eat. It is wrong to fight, especially with girls, but what are you going to do when people say things about your mother's pies?

Why Johnny Failed.

Johnny had a little mind; it was his very own,
And nothing could be put in it except by him alone.
It wasn't very big, it's true, but then As was room inside
For lots of fine things, chosen just a of Johnny should decide.

Mother and father gave to him all sorts of good advice,
But Johnny never put it in or thought about it twice;
But all the wicked things the boys around the corner said,
Why, Johnny picked them up at once and put them in his head.

At school the teacher tried her best to give him facts and rules
Of every useful sort—but, no! For Johnny hated schools.
He picked up brag and vulgar slang, cheap novels, too, ten deep,
And filled his mind till it was like a piled up rubbish heap.

So when the day of manhood came when Johnny searched his mind
For skill and power, it played him false, and nothing could he find
But worthless thoughts and wicked thoughts, and so he failed, alas!
Is any other boy who reads coming to Johnny's pass?

The Curse of Riches.

You may have heard that rich persons are not always happy merely because they are rich. Children would not be so happy, it may be believed, if they had to worry about too much money. Likewise, your bull pup would be sadder than usual if he had to worry as much as the rich dog of St. Louis. The dog in St. Louis learned a trick and he liked to show off. All dogs do. The happiest dogs in the world are those that perform in theaters, because there are so many persons to watch them show off. The St. Louis dog did his little trick whenever he was permitted to. It was not much of trick. It was merely having a coin put on his nose and then tossing the coin into the air and catching it in his mouth. He did this many times, and sometimes went too far. He swallowed three of the coins, two quarters and a nickel, and not long ago he swallowed half a dollar. All that wealth inside him made trouble in his internal arrangements, and he grew sick. He was taken to the doctor and the doctor said that the only way to save both the dog and the money was to perform a surgical operation on one and remove the other. So now the vain and wealthy dog is to be cut open and sewed up again.

The Fountain.

There was once a child who saw a fountain playing.

"How long do you play?" she said.

"All day," replied the fountain, playing merrily.

"How idle!" said the child. "I would not play all day if I could. Do you never work?"

"Certainly I work," replied the fountain. "I work all day long."

"But you are always playing," said the child. "Playing is not work."

"Ah, well," replied the fountain, "it's all the same to me. I sparkle and shower and have the most glorious time. I am playing all the time I am working, and it's the gayest kind of a life. Why don't you get some fun out of your work, too?"

"Fun!" replied the child. "No, indeed, I wouldn't think of such a thing." And she turned away.

The fountain dashed a merry flick of spray after her and the drops laughed as they fell into the water.

Letter to the King.

Flogging in the schools of Denmark was stopped because of the following letter, which King Christian found in his mail one morning:

"Dear King: We are four boys at Flakkebjerb school, and the master whips us every day with a piece of steel rope he found in the arbor. If he doesn't stop there will be a fire."

The King visited the school, dismissed the teacher and had the boys treated to cakes and chocolate at his expense. Then he warned all teachers to avoid corporal punishment, saying that they must not make ruffians of the boys by ruffianly treatment.

Young Emperors.

There is a new emperor in the world. Perhaps you have heard of him. His name is Lidj Jeasu, and he is 15 years old. He has a wife 9 years old, and they were married two years ago. What is he emperor of? He is emperor of Abyssinia, a country that you can find in northeastern Africa if you look hard enough. It is a large county for such a young emperor. He takes the place of his grandfather, Emperor Menelik.

China, also, has a child ruler. The little Chinese emperor must be nearly 4 years old now, and he has been emperor so long that most of you have probably heard of him before this.

Learn a little every day and then proceed to forget the most of it.